

Studies in Euroculture, Volume 1

# Europe – Space for Transcultural Existence?

Edited by Martin Tamcke, Janny de Jong  
Lars Klein, Margriet van der Waal



Universitätsverlag Göttingen





Martin Tamcke, Janny de Jong, Lars Klein, Margriet van der Waal (Eds.)  
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# Europe – Space for Transcultural Existence?

Edited by  
Martin Tamcke,  
Janny de Jong, Lars Klein,  
Margriet van der Waal

With contributions from  
Asier Altuna-García de Salazar, Bill Bell,  
Paul Blokker, Marcin Galent, Elizabeth M.  
Goering, Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz, Janny de  
Jong, Lars Klein, Alexandre Kostka, Anna Pia de  
Luca, John McCormick, Péter Nádas, María Pilar  
Rodríguez, Bianca Polo Del Vecchio, Grzegorz  
Pozarlik, Katharina Raabe, Sascha Schießl, Richard  
Swartz, Martin Tamcke, Bassam Tibi, Herman  
Voogtsgeerd, and Margriet van der Waal

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# Table of Contents

<i>Martin Tamcke / Janny de Jong / Lars Klein / Margriet van der Waal</i> Introduction	9
1. European Identities	
<i>Péter Nádas / Richard Swartz / Katharina Raabe</i> Europa im Zwiegespräch	21
<i>Bassam Tibi</i> European Identity Contested?	47
<i>Lars Klein</i> How (Not) to Fix European Identity?	57
<i>John McCormick</i> Cosmopolitanism and European Identity	67
<i>Grzegorz Pożarlik</i> Individual, Collective, Social Identity as (Most) Contested Social Science Concept in the Symbolic Interactionism Perspective	77
2. Postcolonial Europe	
<i>Bill Bell</i> Zeichen als Wunder? Eine der Geschichte entnommene Anekdote	89

<i>Janny de Jong</i> Empire at Home	117
<i>Margriet van der Waal</i> Contesting Cultural Memory. Rethinking Postcolonial Identities in Europe	125
<i>Elizabeth M. Goering</i> Entering the Third Dimension. A CMM (Coordinated Management of Meaning) Analysis of Transculturalism in Inter/Action	133
3. Towards a Transcultural Europe?	
<i>Martin Tamcke</i> On the Path to Transculturality	143
<i>Janny de Jong</i> “Here We Go Again”. The Supposed Failure of Multiculturalism in Historical Perspective	151
<i>John McCormick</i> European Multiculturalism. Is It Really Dead?	163
<i>María Pilar Rodríguez</i> Multiculturalism vs Transculturality. European Film	175
<i>Asier Altuna-García de Salazar</i> Envisaging Transcultural Realities through Literature in Europe. The Case of Ireland	185
<i>Anna Pia de Luca</i> Transcultural Encounters in Re-Inscribing Identity. European Memories and Ethnic Writing in Canada	195
<i>Marcin Galent</i> Social Capital of Migrants in Transcultural Europe	207



*Alexandre Kostka*The *Neustadt* in Strasbourg.

A space for Transcultural Identity Building?

217

## 4. The Role of the State

*Paul Blokker*

Multiple Democracies.

A Cultural-Sociological Approach to

Democratization and Europeanization

235

*Herman Voogsgaard*

The European Court of Justice between Cosmopolitanism and

National Identity

243

*Bianca Polo Del Vecchio*

The United Kingdom and the European Union.

The Shaping of Public Opinion

251

*Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz*

From a Traumatic Past to a Constructive Future.

The Spanish Transition Period as a Case Study

261

*Sascha Schießl*Identity, Memory, and Belonging. The Friedland Transit Camp  
and the Process of Admission to Post-War Germany

271

Acknowledgements

285

About the Contributors

287



# Introduction

Martin Tamcke, Janny de Jong, Lars Klein and Margriet van der Waal

This book is the joint publication of two international scientific conferences that took place from 18-19 June 2010 at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, and from 24-25 June 2011 at the University of Göttingen, Germany. Both conferences were closely related to the Erasmus Mundus Master of Excellence Euroculture: Europe in the Wider World, a two year (120 ECTS) programme offered by a consortium of eight European universities in collaboration with four partner universities outside Europe.

The Master programme uses the term *Euroculture* as a concept to reflect in an interdisciplinary way on the many different expressions and manifestations of self-understandings of societies, social groups and individuals of, about and within Europe. The programme includes knowledge of historical perspectives, political issues, social relations, legal issues and cultural and religious traditions. Discussions on cultural identity take a prominent position in the programme as do issues such as transnational cultural contacts, popular culture and the role and function of the media in shaping social processes.

Therefore, the first scientific conference associated with the programme had the explicit intention to explore the impact of culture as an element of political and social development within Europe. As was stated in the call for papers:

The term *Euroculture* offers great advantages as a label for a study programme and poses exciting challenges as a conceptual research tool. Cross-over and interdisciplinary research include attempts to link political concepts such as Europeanisation with cultural ones such as identity. The concept of citizenship has (in this) become a central focal point.

The participants to this first conference discussed topics such as cosmopolitanism, cultural memory and traumatic past(s), colonial heritage, democratization and Europeanization as well as the concept of (European) identity in various disciplinary contexts such as law and the social sciences.

The second conference continued where the one in Groningen left off by asking more specifically in which way Europeanization and globalization have influenced life in Europe. It has become a truism that in today's world all countries and cultures have become interconnected and been influencing each other constantly. But what does that mean exactly? To follow up on this question further, the sec-

ond conference inquired whether people have turned ‘transcultural’. The ‘trans’ was understood as indicator of an overlapping mix of cultures that does not allow for the construction of sharp differentiations anymore. Wolfgang Welsch’s distinction of intercultural, multicultural and transcultural has thus been a recurring theme during the conference.<sup>1</sup> While in Welsch’s view ‘transculturalism’ entails an appreciation of diverse influences, it is in no way a given that indeed these influences constitute positive enrichments rather than a dissolution and watering down of traditional and cherished understandings of culture.

By investigating a “Space for Transcultural Existence”, the conference put a special emphasis on topics such as (im)migration and integration, as well as cultural products and lifestyle. Most contributions turned out to examine the receiving end, rather than that of the senders, in the spread of Europeanization and globalization. Others asked how these processes are organized and which role the state and other institutions or companies play or could play.

The usage of ‘space’, finally, underlines the openness of the procedures and structures. It is thus more than a geographical category, it is also a social concept. According to Homi Bhabha, in creating and discussing culture, communication and exchange processes provide for a constant change in all original perspectives.<sup>2</sup> So that in effect, there is neither the one nor the other anymore. Any bipolar understanding is overcome and a ‘third space’, an ‘in-between’ created. Whether or not that is the case, was what many contributors aimed to find out. The call for papers posed the following questions:

Is there “space” for more than one culture in oneself, or can it be that people are afraid of challenging the very core of their identity? Does transculturality stand in competition to multicultural or intercultural approaches, or is it of supplementary nature? This leads to more general understandings of culture and to questions of inner homogeneity and outer delimitation. Here, one could reflect, for example, on increasing extremist nationalism, separatism and ghettoization.

## Sections

For this publication, we have decided not to maintain the ordering of the contributions according to the original conferences, but rather to follow thematic threads that run through the various contributions. These threads form the basis of the section description below.

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, Work*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 194-213.

<sup>2</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern. The Question of Agency,” in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 171-197.

*Section 1: European Identities*

Section one on European identities opens with a conversation between the Hungarian writer Péter Nádas and the Swedish journalist and writer Richard Swartz. Nádas and Swartz had met in 1989 for a long discussion on their life and work in a changing Europe, which was subsequently published as a book. For the conference in Göttingen, they had been asked to resume their discussion. Moderated by Katharina Raabe and co-hosted by the Literarische Zentrum, the two paint a rather dark picture of Europe today. Nádas senses a failure to come to an understanding of “Easterners” and “Westerners”. Swartz argues that although the division has historical roots, a better mutual understanding can only be achieved on the basis of historical knowledge. “This kind of freedom feels cold,” as Nádas puts it.

In his contribution, the international relations scholar Bassam Tibi argues for an understanding of identity that is based on cultural diversity. As in his definition of ‘Leitkultur’ that Tibi had coined in earlier writings for the German context, he formulates an idea of cultural diversity that is conditioned by consent to the core values civil society, freedom of belief and gender equality. For Tibi, identity has many dimensions. He names individual identity, professional identity, citizenship identity, as well as civilisational identity. Tibi perceives himself as part of two civilizations, Islam and Europe, so that with regard to both identifications identities, he finds himself in a constant struggle for harmonization.

The political scientist John McCormick examines European identity in its cosmopolitan dimensions. In his contribution, he holds that the cosmopolitan qualities of the EU have only been discussed theoretically, but they can be grasped in the “realities of the European experience.” Here, McCormick points to European understandings of patriotism and multilateralism, on which he further elaborates in his text. A cosmopolitan approach in the latter case shows, according to the author, a turn away from a ‘European exceptionalism’ or “Europe’s self-doubt about its power.” With regard to the concept of patriotism, McCormick refers to Habermas’ concept of ‘constitutional patriotism,’ which he considers applicable to the European level. Whether or not it would be better to leave the meaning of European identity open for debate, is a question he concludes his article with.

This question is elaborated on by the cultural historian Lars Klein in his contribution. He traces some attempts that have been undertaken to come to a common understanding of a European identity. For the author, neither an attempt to define the EU against an ‘other’ (such as the United States of America) nor an attempt to define a set of common values haven proven to be a solid and inclusive basis for the EU. He holds that the ongoing ‘sovereign debt crisis’ was further delimited this basis and suggests an open and always changing, always to-be-negotiated understanding of Europeanness.

The section closes with political sociologist Grzegorz Pożarlik’s discussion of the challenge to maintain the use of identity as a useful concept in the social sciences. In the first part of his contribution, the author explains that a conceptual

“road map” is required to ensure the use of this concept and he therefore introduces the notion of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is, as such a concept, capable of bringing together individual and collective aspects of identity formation, by emphasising the social dimensions of this process, influenced by the flux and dynamic character of current society. In the second part of his paper, Požarlik turns his focus to a number of recent studies, which indicate(s) the usefulness of applying the notion of symbolic interactionism to understanding processes of identity formation in relation to social processes such as migration and professional mobility within a European context.

### *Section 2: Postcolonial Europe*

Section 2, on postcolonial Europe, opens with literature and history of the book scholar Bill Bell launching a lucid and gripping ‘myth busting’ engagement with Homi Bhabha’s influential article, “Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817”. By carefully reconsidering the historical evidence available about the anecdotal event describing the assembling of a large group of Indians and the circulation of a number of copies of the Bible, Bell formulates caution with regard to a facile and uncritical use of concepts such as hybridity, sly civility and mimicry. Bell’s paper shows that Bhabha’s account clearly does not take the complexity of the historical facts and context sufficiently or correctly in consideration and has too easily been inscribed in a particular postcolonial critique of the relationship between Indians and the English than the historical facts warrant. Bell’s account shows that the historical facts reveal not only a much more complex and multidimensional process, but also, and even more importantly, the existence of specific human beings who become the subjects of history. His conclusion, thus, echoes a warning to any project engaging with social relationships across time: “we should be careful not to write history out of the subject, or the subject out of history.”

Continuing with the lines of enquiry set out by Bill Bell, historian Janny de Jong opens her paper on the relevance of studying colonial ties with the empire in order to understand Europe and its relation with non-European countries by stressing the longevity of imperial relations in the form of unequal power relations. De Jong asks what benefit the discipline of history might experience from the kinds of questions posed within the field of European Studies, by identifying two key questions: To which extent does a common and unique European culture exist in relation to non-European and regional cultures? Secondly, what are the perceptions within and from outside of Europe concerning cultural transformations in Europe? Clearly, Eurocentrism plays a problematic role in endeavours to study relations between Europe and its former colonies, as well as other areas of the world. One way of dealing with this problematic Eurocentric attitude, is to direct the gaze of inquiry about the effects of empire to European domestic history itself,

in order to understand contemporary Europe with its multiplicity of cultural, social and political dimensions.

It is exactly this idea of turning the gaze to the inside that is taken up in the contribution by Margriet van der Waal, within the context of cultural studies. Her paper considers collective memory and debates in a context where different experiences of traumatic events are seemingly played out against each other in a struggle for meaning and priority. The novel, *Alleen Maar Nette Mensen* (Only Decent People), by Robert Vuijsje (published in 2008, and released as film in the Netherlands in October 2012), is such an occasion where the topics of Dutch colonialism and slavery are brought into focus together with considerations of Jewish identity and commemoration of the Holocaust. Van der Waal argues that the way in which these issues are represented implies the existence of various, exclusive memory cultures delineated along ethnic lines. Therefore, she explains, traumatic events need to be investigated as semiotic sign systems constructing senses of cultural identity, which in turn will allow a greater understanding of how constructions of European identity are intertwined with such problematic issues as racism, trauma and memory.

In the final contribution to this section, communication scholar Elizabeth Goering contributes to the topic of the postcolonial in Europe with a critical reflection on the negative attitude towards the European multicultural society and the possibility of transculturality by means of a case study. She analyses the social and intercultural interaction between a school teacher and his/her pupils in the French film, *Entre les Murs* (2008), with recourse to the ‘coordinated management of meaning method’. In her conclusion she emphatically states that transcultural spaces – the location of multicultural interaction – are possible, but admittedly require arduous and continuous effort from the side of all (actors) involved. Such effort entails being willing to share and listen in a context of respect and openness to personal stories that we and others tell about ourselves and themselves. Within such a context it does become episodically possible, as her analysis of the film optimistically shows, to find evidence of the existence of transculturality within a European context.

### *Section 3: Towards a Transcultural Europe?*

All articles in this section were first presented at the 2011 Euroculture conference in Göttingen and use the remark of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel that “multiculturalism has absolutely failed” as a starting point. To what extent was her statement correct, and if so, did or does it apply to Europe as a whole? What are the underlying norms and values in today’s Europe? At the time of the conference, the British Prime Minister David Cameron and the French President Nicolas Sarkozy had joined Merkel’s scepticism about the multicultural state and society which made the problematising of this issue even more timely and up to date.

This section opens with a contribution, by ecumenics and oriental church historian Martin Tamcke, on “the path to transculturality”. After giving the telling example of two Muslim scholars in Bulgaria who converted to Christianity in the early 1900s and mingled Christian, Western ideas with Islamic reformatory speech and in the process alienated themselves from both the Christian and the Muslim world, he explores the various readings and explanations of transculturalism. Tamcke defines transculturalism as a “passage through all particularism and interaction towards a common ground or aim”. This does not mean by the way, that all cultural differences are abandoned throughout this process.

The same holds true for multiculturalism, as Janny de Jong argues. Janny de Jong and John McCormick both explicitly address the issue of multiculturalism, and point to the difficulty of properly defining this concept. Contrary to how multiculturalism is depicted in the public debate, this idea/concept entails that integration of immigrants is possible without urging them to assimilate/copy norms, values and behaviour of the majority population. Taking a historical perspective into consideration can be very helpful, De Jong argues, because it illuminates the roots of the different integration policies throughout Europe. Furthermore it may serve to create a more balanced view on migration through time, showing what multiculturalism was and really is about. Multiculturalism has become framed in public debates as a (too) soft approach of problems related to immigration which stresses the necessity of a more distanced perspective.

Proclaiming multiculturalism dead is absurd, John McCormick states, because obviously all of Europe is distinctly multicultural and multinational in character. Almost all European states consist of multiple cultures; within the European member states there are no fewer than 160 national minorities. Although multiculturalism in the European context usually relates to immigrant communities, it is more appropriately understood with regard to indigenous minorities. McCormick argues that it has been very successful in that respect: Europe has recognized and protected its cultural differences through, for instance, sustenance of minority languages. However, it failed in accommodating racial and religious minorities, in particular the postwar immigrants. The problems ascribed to the failure of multiculturalism therefore are in fact a function of race and religion.

In the next contribution the concepts of trans- and multiculturalism are analysed through the lenses of film and literature by cultural studies scholar Maria Pilar Rodríguez, who shows how contemporary film directors address(ed) the shift from national contexts to transnational surroundings, places and cultures. Two films are discussed in more detail: *Inch'Allah Dimanche* (*Inch'Allah Sunday* by Yasmina Benguigui, 2001) and *Gegen die Wand* (*Against the Wall* by Fatih Akin, 2004). These films show that cultural interaction results in new domestic and urban spaces, hybrid cultures and in multilingual practices. Contemporary life such as depicted in these films is very different from official political discourses on multiculturalism.



With Asier Altuna-García de Salazar, scholar of Irish literature, we turn to the work of Roddy Doyle, Margaret McCarthy and Hugo Hamilton. Their works portray a transcultural Irish reality in an Ireland whose society and economy has obtained a global character. Doyle's short story "57% Irish" in particular shows the lack of validity of former pillars of Irish identity; identity is not fixed but fluid. Transculturalism, as Altuna writes, should be seen as a "useful tool for the recognition of identity reformulation processes". What holds true for Ireland, also applies to Europe at large.

Anna Pia de Luca, scholar of Canadian literature, shows how European memories, especially of second-generation writers, and Canadian experiences blend. This is literally symbolized in the 'mixed grill' dish that author Fred Wah makes in his father's restaurant as a symbol for a variegated cultural identity. Language and 'doubleness' form a recurrent pattern in literature, especially in the work of Gianna Patriarca and Mary di Michele. But perhaps Janice Kulyk Keefer, who blends Ukrainian family history with experiences in Canada, gives the clearest portrayal of what Pia de Luca describes as the "different selves that co-exist within a person's variegated and constantly changing identity".

The sociologist Marcin Galent presents a study undertaken among Polish migrants in the Belgian city of Leuven. His research into the scale and quality of the social capital of these migrants allows Galent to further cluster this group. He differentiates between 'residents', 'guests', 'commuters' and 'diasporians', whose identity is influenced by their experiences and connections made in Leuven. In elaborating on these ideal types, Galent also aims to contribute to a better understanding of the conditions of the world in its transculturality and overlapping identities.

Alexandre Kostka, cultural historian, concludes this section with an analysis of whether the *Neustadt*, an area within the inner city of Strasbourg, can be seen as a space for transcultural identity building. The *Neustadt* was built between 1878 and 1918, a time when Alsace-Lorraine was part of the German Empire. Yet the buildings do not reflect a German patriotic or national character, making for instance also use of "French" architectural styles. Kostka suggests that the architecture and urban town planning of this part of Strasbourg can best be understood as a form of *histoire croisée* and the result of a continuous debate between many stakeholders such as politicians, entrepreneurs and architects.

#### *Section 4: The Role of the State*

The fourth section, on the role of the State, is opened with the article "Multiple Democracies" by the sociologist Paul Blokker. Blokker discusses the phenomena of democratization and Europeanization with regard to its cultural-sociological implications. Especially the cultural dimension is important to him, since, as he holds, it is often overlooked in research on democratization. As he shows with case studies from post-1989 East-Central Europe, political culture is of relevance

in particular with regard to “the ethics of rights, of identity, of solidarity, and of participation”.

The second article, in turn, argues that the relevance of the judiciary for cultural matters is easily underestimated. Herman Voogsgeerd, whose fields of expertise are law as well as international relations, discusses the role of the European Court of Justice as caught between cosmopolitanism and national identities. Building on the premise that there is an interrelation between law and identity, Voogsgeerd asks whether the ECJ has been promoting cosmopolitan values. This question is of special importance beyond the more narrow fields of law, since, as the author ventures, law “may easily enter the domain of culture”. Voogsgeerd underlines the ECJ’s role in cases concerning the rights of migrants and free-movers and stresses the necessity to “remain sensitive for cultural pluralism”.

The political sociologist Bianca Polo Del Vecchio analyses the relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union. Del Vecchio’s premise is that the “‘goodness of fit’ of domestic institutions, policies and processes with those of the EU” may explain the Eurosceptic stance taken by many in the UK, though not fully. In her contribution, she thus starts off by rationalising negative public attitudes towards the EU. In her analysis, a strong national identity in Britain as well as the misfit of institutions and the absence of a public debate on Britain’s EU membership contribute to a situation in which even members of the EU parliament do not dare to take a more pro-European stance.

The historian and political scientist Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz discusses the Spanish transition period from the early 1970s onwards as a transition “from a traumatic past to a constructive Future”. He challenges those views according to which memories of the Spanish Civil War have not been dealt with and adequately reassessed after Franco’s death. Instead, he holds that in dealing with the past, traumatic events have been worked on in a manner that contributed to and was supported by “the incorporation of the country into the European Union”. The opening of new perspectives and working across national borders has thus, according to Ibarrola-Armendariz, been fostered in this transition period.

The historian Sascha Schießl, in his article, “Identity, Memory and Belonging,” analyses the function of the Friedland Transit Camp in Post-War Germany. He highlights the importance of the camp as the “most outstanding place” in which people were prepared for entering German society as German citizens. It is these “conditions and procedures of admission” that Schießl analyses in more depths, since they help to understand what was expected of refugees and expellees going through Friedland and which idea of a German citizen was prevalent at the time. Thus, Schießl aims at a better understanding of identity, memory and public commemoration.

The contributions all analyse very important aspects of current developments in Europe. The importance of this can hardly be underestimated and understated. The present economic crisis and debt crisis have led, as side-result, to a public

attack on the open, cosmopolitan outlook of Europe. The values of the multicultural and civil society and the idea of a people's Europe have become debatable. The editors are convinced that in this respect the contributions in this volume will offer food for thought and critical reflection.



**Part One**  
**European Identities**



# Europa im Zwiegespräch

Péter Nádas und Richard Swartz im Gespräch mit Katharina Raabe<sup>1</sup>

*Raabe:*

Péter Nádas und Richard Swartz haben sich überreden lassen, hierher nach Göttingen zu kommen und einen Abend lang ihr Gespräch wieder aufzunehmen, das sie an vier Tagen im Jahr 1989 geführt haben. Sie werden versuchen, ihre damaligen Gedanken und Beobachtungen im Lichte der Dinge, die seit damals passiert sind, zu reflektieren.

Bei den unzähligen Veranstaltungen zum 20. Jahrestag der Ereignisse von 1989 gab es häufig Gelegenheit, auf diversen Podien Rückschau zu halten und Einschätzungen abzugeben. Was aber nicht stattfand, das war die Besichtigung eines vergangenen Zeitalters aus der Perspektive zweier Schriftsteller und Intellektueller, die sich schon einmal, vor der epochalen Wende, wenige Monate vor dem Herbst 1989, über sich selbst unterhalten haben, wie Freunde das tun, in einer gewissen brüderlichen Vertrautheit sich von ihrer Kindheit, ihrer Herkunft erzählt und dabei auch ein bisschen ineinander gespiegelt haben. Dass dies so ein ingenöser Versuch war, hängt maßgeblich mit dem Autor des Buches zusammen, das dann auf Deutsch unter dem Titel „Zwiesprache“ erschien, nämlich mit Péter Nádas, der dem Leser, jedenfalls zu Anfang, als Initiator vorkommen wird.<sup>2</sup> Er ist es, der seinen Freund Richard Swartz, den ‚Westmenschen‘ aus Schweden, einem peripheren europäischen Land, in die Mangel nimmt und befragt.

Péter Nádas wurde 1942 geboren. Er ist ausgebildeter Fotograf, arbeitete kurze Zeit als Journalist, genauer als Fotoreporter, und debütierte 1967 mit einem Band erzählender Prosa. 1977 erschien Ende eines Familienromans, gleichsam der große Anlauf zu seinem Werk „Buch der Erinnerung“<sup>3</sup>, das 1986 in Ungarn und 1991 in Deutschland erschien und das viele Leser damals in ein geradezu schreckstarres Erstaunen versetzt hat: Das Neue und Überwältigende an diesem Buch war der radikale, fast ins Vivisektorische gehende Versuch, die intimsten Regungen eines empfindenden Subjekts, die verborgenen Zentren seines Ich als Austragungsort

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<sup>1</sup> Am 23.06.2011 in der Paulinerkirche Göttingen auf Einladung des Euroculture-Programms, des European Studies Intensive Programmes und des Literarischen Zentrums Göttingen.

<sup>2</sup> Péter Nádas / Richard Swartz, *Zwiesprache. Vier Tage im Jahr 1989* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Péter Nádas, *Buch der Erinnerung* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1992).

von gesellschaftlicher Repression zu beschreiben. Hier wird von den Verstörungen einer Kindheit gesprochen, aber auch von der Sinnlichkeit, von der Sehnsucht nach dem Anderen und der Verschmelzung mit ihm, von einem Begehren, dem die frühe Erfahrung von Tod und Verlust eingebrannt ist. Das komplexe Werk verknüpft drei Erzählstränge: einen Entwicklungsroman aus dem Ungarn der 50er Jahre, eine Erzählung über einen Schriftsteller, der, quasi wie ein Bruder von Thomas Mann, um 1900 im Ostseebad Heiligendamm seine Homosexualität entdeckt, und eine homoerotische Liebesgeschichte im Ost-Berlin der 70er Jahre. Die markanten Ereignisse jener Zeit, das Jahr 1953, Stalins Tod, Arbeiteraufstand in Ost-Berlin, der Aufstand in Budapest 1956, die Niederschlagung des Prager Frühlings – all das bleibt im Hintergrund und ist doch im Textgewebe anwesend. Nádas wollte, wie er sagte, „die unpersönliche Geschichte auf die persönlichste Weise aufarbeiten“ und rückte deshalb den Körper ins Zentrum der existentiellen Selbsterforschung. Péter Nádas ist ein Autor mit der seltenen Fähigkeit, aus den Details des Ephemereren, der flüchtigen Wahrnehmungen, der kaum an die Schwelle des Bewußtseins gehobenen Empfindung, Bilder einer Epoche aufzubauen. Er ist ein Minimalist und Sensualist, er erforscht die labyrinthischen Verzweigungen und die Brüche und Schocks der Geschichte genauso mikroskopisch wie das gewaltige und zarte Gebilde: die menschliche Seele.

Als Motto über dem „Buch der Erinnerung“ stand der Satz: „Es war meine Absicht, Geschichten zu erzählen, ein wenig wie Plutarch, parallele Erinnerungen verschiedener Personen zu verschiedenen Zeiten, und die verschiedenen Personen wären naturgemäß alle ich, ohne dass ich es wirklich wäre.“<sup>4</sup> 2005 erschienen, nach achtzehnjähriger Arbeit, die also unmittelbar nach dem Ende des „Buchs der Erinnerung“ begonnen haben muss, die „Parallelgeschichten“<sup>5</sup>, ein nochmals umfangreicheres Werk, ebenfalls Geschichten aus dem 20. Jahrhundert, in dem die parallelen Geschichten zwischen einer ungarischen und einer deutschen Familie, entlang noch weit dramatischerer Bruchlinien erzählt wird.

Péter Nádas hat sich seit der Wende immer wieder mit scharfsinnigen Reden und Essays zum politischen Geschehen zu Wort gemeldet hat. Ich erinnere nur an den großen „Kursbuch“-Aufsatz „Armer Sascha Anderson“<sup>6</sup> über den Verrat eines Schriftstellers an seine Kollegen.

Richard Swartz wurde 1945 in Stockholm geboren, studierte an der dortigen Handelsakademie und ging 1970 bis 1972 an die Karls-Universität nach Prag. Er promovierte und arbeitete dreißig Jahre lang als Korrespondent des Svenska Dagbladet, seit 1976 von Wien aus. Während die meisten Korrespondenten irgendwann ihre Felder wechselten, nach Paris, damals noch nach Bonn, nach Washington, nach Moskau gingen, blieb Richard Swartz Ostmitteleuropa treu und verfügt

<sup>4</sup> Nádas, „Buch der Erinnerung“, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Péter Nádas, *Parallelgeschichten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Péter Nádas, „Armer Sascha Anderson“, *Kursbuch* 108 (Juli 1992): 163-88.



deshalb über eine sehr seltene, lange Epochenerfahrung. Ähnlich wie Péter Nádas mit seinem „Buch der Erinnerung“ war auch Richard Swartz mit einem einzigen Buch plötzlich da: „Room Service“<sup>7</sup>, dieser zu Recht international stark wahrgenommene Band von Reportagen, Berichten und Erzählungen hat einem ahnungslosen Publikum das unbekannte, kaum beleuchtete, in Dunkel und Verfall dahinlebenden osteuropäischen Gelände nahegebracht. Richard Swartz hat entlegene, unbequeme Orte, besucht. Er hat den Bericht eines alten Synagogenkantors aufgezeichnet, dessen Worte es ohne ihn, Richard, in der Welt jetzt nicht mehr gäbe. Er hat nach der Revolution, nach der Erschießung des Ehepaars Ceaușescu, mit den Revolutionären Rumäniens gesprochen. Und er gehört, vielleicht wie Karl Schlögel und Martin Pollack, wie Claudio Magris und Timothy Garton Ash, zu denjenigen, ohne die wir sehr viel weniger über die sogenannte andere Hälfte Europas wüssten. In der „Zwiesprache“ heißt es: „Meine ganze Existenz ist darauf begründet, dass ich mich mit einer Welt beschäftige, die nicht die meine ist, auch wenn sie mir sehr nahe steht.“<sup>8</sup>

Die Welt, über die diese beiden im Frühjahr 1989 in Ungarn reden, war damals tatsächlich noch eine geteilte Welt. Wie sieht diese Welt heute aus? Was hätten Sie sich zu sagen, wenn Sie Ihr damaliges Gespräch heute wiederholen würden? Wann haben Sie überhaupt zum letzten Mal miteinander gesprochen? Wann haben Sie sich das letzte Mal gesehen?

*Swartz:*

Péter lebt in Gombosszeg und ich lebe in Wien, das heißt, wir begegnen uns nicht sehr häufig. Das letzte Mal, dass wir uns getroffen haben, war unter merkwürdigen Umständen: Péter erschien mir in einem Traum mit schönem Gesicht und buschigen Augenbrauen. Er erzählte mir, Kardinal Richelieu habe an Seelenwanderung geglaubt. Ich war skeptisch, denn das klingt nicht sehr katholisch, eher blasphemisch. Aber Péter insistierte, dass Richelieu auf seinem Sterbebett sogar angefangen habe, Heu zu essen, weil er überzeugt gewesen sei, in seinem nächsten Leben ein Pferd zu sein. Das habe ich dir nicht geglaubt, Péter, aber ich glaube oft nicht, was du mir erzählst.

*Nádas:*

Ja, das ist unser großes Problem, obwohl ich natürlich immer die Wahrheit sage, er glaubt mir nie.

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Swartz, *Room Service. Geschichten aus Europas Nahem Osten* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> Nádas / Swartz, „Zwiesprache“, 192.

*Swartz:*

Das mag stimmen, traf in diesem Fall aber sicher nicht zu. Unser letztes wirkliches Treffen war vor anderthalb Jahren. Ich bin zu Péter nach Gombosszeg gereist, um etwas über Ungarn zu erfahren.

*Raabe:*

Péter Nádas hatte Sie von Anfang an im Verdacht, nicht einfach nur Journalist zu sein. In Ihnen stecke eigentlich ein Schriftsteller.

*Swartz:*

Das klingt etwas abfällig gegenüber Journalisten.

*Nádas:*

Ich meinte damit lediglich, dass Richards Schilderungen die Grenzen des Journalismus überschreiten. Das beginnt schon mit den Fragen, die er stellt, denn sie zielen nicht einfach auf Antworten ab, sondern ermuntern die Gesprächspartner zum richtigen Erzählen. Dieser Wunsch, Hintergründe auszuleuchten, ist kein typischer Charakterzug von Journalisten, das geht über die bloße journalistische Neugier weit hinaus. Das hat mich davon überzeugt, dass Richard selbst eine Neigung zum Erzählen hat. Ich habe mich darin auch nicht getäuscht. Er hat in der Tat im Laufe der Zeit angefangen, seine eigenen Erzählungen zu veröffentlichen. Diese Erzählungen sind unglaublich fein und sehr tiefgehend, zeugen also von einer großen Erfahrung.

*Swartz:*

Sie sehen, wie sanft wir miteinander umgehen?

*Nádas:*

Sei ruhig, es wird härter.

*Raabe:*

Richard Swartz, Sie haben immer gesagt, dass das Sich-Fremd-Fühlen in diesem Osteuropa wichtig für ihre journalistische Arbeit war. Sie hatten die Freiheit, zu kommen und wieder zu gehen. Sie konnten sich den Dingen, die Sie interessierten, zuwenden und dann wieder verschwinden. Ein Schriftsteller aber bleibt doch an den Dingen hängen, er wird sie nicht so einfach wieder los. Die Tatsache, dass Sie bis zum heutigen Tag immer wieder hinfahren, spricht dafür, dass Sie sie nicht wieder losgeworden sind.

Wie hat sich denn dieses gesamte west-östliche Gelände verändert seit Ihrer letzten Zwiesprache im Jahr 1989? Reizt es Sie noch, dorthin zu fahren, oder quält es Sie?

*Swartz:*

Beides, würde ich sagen. Es kann auch gar nicht anders sein. Schauen Sie, allein einen anderen Menschen wirklich kennenzulernen, Dinge über sein Leben zu erfahren und ihn zu verstehen, ist eine fast unmögliche Aufgabe, wahrscheinlich weil man von sich selbst bereits so wenig weiß. Um wie viel schwieriger ist es da, sich eine ganze Welt anzueignen! Und den Begriff Welt würde ich für dieses Osteuropa verwenden wollen. Diese Aufgabe ist eine Zumutung, sie ist nicht zu lösen. Man kann die Grenzen überschreiten und versuchen zu verstehen, aber man schafft es nicht wirklich.

Péter hatte die gleiche Neugier, nur in der umgekehrten Richtung. Er selbst kann das besser schildern als ich, aber ich glaube, auch er hat bis zum heutigen Tag nicht alles verstanden, was unser Leben im Westen ausmacht.

Was ist geblieben vom alten Osteuropa von vor 1989? Ich fürchte, sehr viel. Ich bin der Letzte, der die vielen Veränderungen, die stattgefunden haben, unterschätzen möchte. Es ist unglaublich, was da passiert ist, dass der Kommunismus verschwunden ist. Ich hatte nie erwartet, das erleben zu dürfen. Und dennoch, es ist vieles auch geblieben.

*Nádas:*

Ich kann von mir selbst sagen, dass ich in den vergangenen zwanzig Jahren gescheitert bin in dem Versuch, den Westen besser zu verstehen. In der ersten Hälfte meines Lebens habe ich mich sehr darum bemüht, in Belangen der Kunst und Kultur mit der westlichen Welt mitzuhalten und mich auch über das Politische ausreichend zu informieren. Aber die Quellen, die einem zur Verfügung standen, waren nicht immer die verlässlichsten. Ich beispielsweise wählte den Wiener Rundfunk, um mehr über Demokratie zu erfahren. Das war nicht gerade die beste Quelle für diesen Zweck, aber die einzige, die mir zur Verfügung stand. Ich wusste damals jedoch nicht, wie unzulänglich ich da informiert wurde.

*Swartz:*

Es war sogar eine sehr schlechte Quelle.

*Nádas:*

So ist das halt, wenn man in einem Haus ohne Elektrizität auf einer Donauinsel wohnt. Mit meinem kleinen russischen Sokol-Radio konnte ich nur Österreich 1 empfangen. Das hat mir damals sehr viel bedeutet. Ich hörte jeden Tag Nachrich-

ten und andere politische Sendungen, auch Konzerte. Dennoch, auf der Basis solch unzulänglicher Quellen hat man sich auf unserer Seite der Grenze falsche Vorstellungen gemacht. Das gilt nicht nur für mich persönlich, sondern für die gesamte Region.

Wie das Leben im Westen wirklich war, konnten wir häufig nicht errahnen, angesichts der ganz anderen Lebensverhältnisse, die wir hatten. Nur ein kleines Beispiel hierfür: Es gab im realexistierenden Sozialismus keine Reklame im westlichen Stil. Was es gab, das waren große Hinweisschilder, wenn ein Produkt, das sonst Mangelware war, einmal zur Verfügung stand. Dann konnte man beispielsweise überall lesen: „Geht ins Schuhgeschäft und kauft Schuhe!“ Das war die uns geläufige Form der Reklame. Also bin ich, wenn diese Schilder auftauchten, auch tatsächlich ins Schuhgeschäft gegangen, denn Schuhe sind ein menschliches Grundbedürfnis. Nur häufig wurden eben keine neuen Schuhe angeboten.

*Swartz:*

Oder es wurde nur ein linker beziehungsweise nur ein rechter Schuh angeboten, nicht beides zusammen.

*Nádas:*

Nein, das stimmt nicht. Es gab schon passende Schuhpaare, nur eben nicht jederzeit. Wenn es sie gab, sprach man davon, dass Schuhe ‚geworfen‘ werden.

*Swartz:*

Daran erinnere ich mich auch noch. Als ich Student in Prag war, hat man sich sofort in eine Schlange eingereiht, die sich irgendwo gebildet hatte, ohne überhaupt zu wissen, was da gerade feilgeboten wird. Nach einiger Zeit fragte man die Leute dann: „Was wird denn hier ‚geworfen‘?“ Und häufig kam die Antwort: „Das wissen wir nicht, irgendetwas halt. Aber wir stehen schon mal an dafür.“

*Nádas:*

Genau. Aufgrund dieser eigenen Erfahrungen machte man sich falsche Vorstellungen vom Westen, insbesondere wenn das wenige, das man kannte, die westliche Form von Reklame war, was sehr häufig der Fall war. Denken Sie an den Marlboro-Mann, diese Werbefigur mit einem kräftigen Körper und scharfen Gesichtszügen, die rauchend durch die Gegend reitet. Man stellte sich in Osteuropa tatsächlich vor, dass so die Wirklichkeit in Stockholm aussieht. Wir waren schlicht desinformiert und hatten dadurch deformierte Bilder im Kopf. Das gilt für die ganze Region. Die DDR war da keine Ausnahme, sondern im Gegenteil sehr typisch. Reklame wurde einfach mit der Realität verwechselt.

*Swartz:*

Das kann ich aus eigener Erfahrung bestätigen. Ich war in Albanien, als der Kommunismus zusammenbrach, und besuchte Freunde dort. Die Töchter der Familie, 11 und 14 Jahre alt, saßen den ganzen Tag vorm Fernsehgerät und haben italienische Sender geschaut, hauptsächlich wegen der Werbung. Die eigentlichen Programme haben sie gar nicht so interessiert. Wenn die liefen, haben sie halt irgendetwas anderes gemacht. Aber die Werbung, die wollten sie auf keinen Fall verpassen. Naja, wenigstens haben sie dabei sehr gut Italienisch gelernt.

*Nádas:*

Ich persönlich bin zumindest dieser Gefahr, mir falsche Vorstellungen aufgrund von Werbung zu machen, entgangen. Reklame hat auf mich nie einen großen Eindruck gemacht. Das gilt auch für die Konsumgüter, für die sie warben. An solchen Dingen hatte ich nie großes Interesse.

Dennoch bin auch ich gescheitert bei dem Versuch, mir ein korrektes Bild vom Westen zu machen. Vor allen Dingen erlag ich der Illusion anzunehmen, dass die westliche Welt auf Vernunft aufgebaut sei, dass Demokratie und Kapitalismus gleichbedeutend mit Vernunft seien. Es war eine sehr große Enttäuschung zu begreifen, dass das nicht so ist. Ich habe in den vergangenen zwanzig Jahren gelernt, dass Vernunft auch im Westen nur lokal vorkommt und sehr begrenzt ist. Wo man auf sie trifft, das kann man sich ab und ausrechnen, aber auch nicht immer. Menschliche Interessen und Vernunft sind häufig gegenläufig, sie fallen nicht immer zusammen.

*Swartz:*

Das alles hättest du eigentlich schon vorher wissen können, denn ich hatte es dir jahrelang gesagt.

*Nádas:*

Ja, aber ich hatte dir das einfach nicht geglaubt.

Meine Vorstellung von der Gesellschaftsordnung der Demokratie war beeinflusst von ihren Ursprüngen in der Französischen Revolution, die selbst wiederum aus der Aufklärung erwuchs. Ohne die Aufklärung hätte es die Französische Revolution nicht gegeben. Mein Irrtum lag darin, anzunehmen, dass die Revolution selbst und das, was daraus erwuchs, vernunftgeleitet sein musste.

*Swartz:*

So steht es in den Büchern, aber das ist nicht die Wirklichkeit.

*Nádas:*

Das weiß ich schon – jetzt.

*Swartz:*

Diese Vorstellung von der Hoheit der Vernunft, wenn diese die Freiheit hat, sich zu entfalten, hast du mit Leuten im Westen geteilt, beispielsweise mit den Neoliberalen. Ich habe in der damaligen Zeit viele Gespräche mit Menschen geführt, die immer wieder sagten: „Der Kommunismus ist weg, wir werden diese Gesellschaften jetzt sehr schnell umbauen.“ Und wenn ich nachfragte, wie das genau geschehen soll, antworteten sie einfach: „Parlamentarische Demokratie und freie Marktwirtschaft ergeben automatisch ein normales Leben.“ Sie haben fest daran geglaubt, auch wenn ich Vorbehalte anmeldete und bekräftigte, dass es so schnell und zwangsläufig nicht vonstattengehen werde. Im Grunde genommen erlagen sie also dem gleichen Trugschluss wie du.

*Nádas:*

Beide Seiten hatten ganz einfach einen sehr großen Mangel an Information. Das betraf im Westen nicht nur die Liberalen, sondern Konservative und Linke fast genauso. Als Helmut Kohl, alles andere als ein Liberaler, 1990 sagte, dass auf dem Gebiet der DDR innerhalb weniger Jahre blühende Landschaften entstehen würden, wusste jeder, der die DDR gut kannte, dass das ganz einfach Blödsinn war. Eine zerfallene Gesellschaft, eine zerfallene Industrie, eine zerfallene Landwirtschaft – das alles konnte keine blühenden Landschaften hervorbringen. Diese Art Trugschlüsse entwuchsen aus einem Mangel an Information, aus einem Unvermögen zu begreifen, was auf der anderen Seite eigentlich vorgegangen ist. Das war auch ein gelenkter Mangel an Information, denn man wollte viele Dinge ganz einfach auch nicht wissen.

*Swartz:*

Es ist sehr wichtig, das hervorzuheben: Man wollte es nicht wissen. Der Unterschied zwischen Ost und West liegt hierbei darin, dass diese Dimension der Ideologie, die ja auf dem Unterdrücken von Information beruht, zwar im Osten zusammengebrochen ist, im Westen aber weitergelebt hat.

Wir haben in diesem Zusammenhang zuvor bereits das Wort Glauben verwendet. Solch ein Glaube kann sehr gefährlich sein, wenn er in ideologischer Form daherkommt. Viele unserer Vorstellungen im Westen waren – und sind es immer noch – von Ideologie geprägt. Um die Empirie hat man sich nicht gekümmert. Ich weiß das sehr gut, denn ich fühlte mich mit meinem Interesse an Osteuropa jahrzehntelang oft recht einsam im Westen. Kaum einer im Westen hat sich für die Wirklichkeit im Osten richtig interessiert. Die Menschen wollten einfach nicht

wissen, was in diesem anderen Teil Europas vor sich ging. Es gab gewisse Konjunkturen des Interesses und Engagements, aber das war dann immer schnell wieder weg. Das war so beim ungarischen Aufstand 1956, beim Prager Frühling 1968, während der Hochphase der Solidarność in Polen 1980...

*Nádas:*

Bei Solidarność war das Interesse schon deutlich geringer als 1956 und 1968.

*Swartz:*

Nein, das würde ich nicht sagen. Das Interesse war auch damals da, nur ist es eben schnell wieder abgeflaut.

Das Gleiche kann man auch heute beobachten. Es gibt eigentlich keine Hindernisse mehr, die Informationen im Weg stehen, aber ich habe nicht den Eindruck, dass man sich im Westen besonders für Osteuropa interessiert. Ich kann beispielsweise nicht erkennen, dass man in Deutschland besonderen Anteil daran nimmt, was in Ungarn vor sich geht, dass es da ein bemerkenswertes Interesse gäbe. Analog gilt dies auch für andere Staatenkombinationen, etwa für das Desinteresse der Österreicher an Rumänien. In meinem Heimatland Schweden ist es nicht anderes. Nicht einmal die naheliegenden baltischen Staaten interessieren meine Landsleute wirklich.

*Raabe:*

Würden Sie sagen, dass es noch immer eine Zweiteilung Europas in Ost und West gibt, oder haben sich diese Grenzen verschoben?

*Swartz:*

Das muss man differenziert betrachten. Natürlich sind sehr viele von diesen Grenzen verschwunden. Das Wort Freiheit ist hier bisher noch nicht gefallen, aber natürlich ist diese Freiheit, die sich auch als Verneinung von Grenzen ausdrückt, eine ungeheure Errungenschaft. Das ist etwas ganz Fantastisches, was da passiert ist. Aber wenn man das genauer analysiert, erkennt man doch, dass es sehr viele Phänomene gibt, Regungen der Seele, Traditionen, Sitten, die uns noch immer trennen.

*Nádas:*

Ich möchte das Desinteresse an Osteuropa, von dem wir gesprochen haben, doch verteidigen. Das ist ganz einfach auch menschlich. Genauso wie reiche Menschen sich nicht für arme Menschen interessieren, nur umgekehrt, ist es auch mit Regionen: Arme Regionen interessieren sich immer für die reichen Regionen, aber in der

entgegengesetzten Richtung ist das Interesse nur da, wenn man etwas Konkretes haben will, wenn man etwas wegnehmen oder ein Tauschgeschäft eingehen möchte. Handel und Finanzgeschäfte basieren auf dieser menschlichen Ungleichheit. Aber wir können von den Reichen, Altreichen wie Neureichen, nicht erwarten, dass sie ein generelles Interesse für ärmere Menschen oder Regionen aufbringen.

Es gibt da noch eine andere Komponente, die vielleicht noch wichtiger ist: Das Strukturierte will immer noch strukturierter werden – und nicht unstrukturierter. Es gibt Umstrukturierungen, sicher, aber das Ergebnis ist dann nur noch mehr Struktur, nicht weniger. Die westlichen Gesellschaften haben mehrere Wellen von Modernisierungen durchgemacht, welche die östlichen Gesellschaften nicht kennen oder nur zum Teil kennen. Das ist ein Strukturproblem.

Ein sehr bedeutender ungarischer Historiker, Jenő Szűcs, Schüler des ebenfalls sehr bedeutenden Historikers István Bibó, hat diesbezüglich eine These aufgestellt, die mir sehr schlüssig erscheint. Er identifizierte drei historische Regionen Europas, die im Kern bis auf das Reich Karls des Großen zurückgehen: das katholische Europa I, das protestantische Europa II und das orthodoxe Europa III. Diese historischen Grenzen, die auch mit der zivilisatorischen Entwicklungsstufe der städtischen Kultur zusammenhängen, zu beseitigen, dafür benötigen wir nicht zwanzig Jahre, sondern vielmehr hunderte von Friedensjahren. Das heißt nicht, die Errungenschaften der jüngsten Geschichte kleinzureden, die Tatsache, dass es in Europa keine Kriege mehr gibt, oder dass beidseitig der beschriebenen Grenzen, abgesehen von Weißrussland, zumindest eine Art von Freiheit existiert. Aber dennoch sind diese großen historischen Grenzen geblieben. Mit Tomasi di Lampedusa könnte man hier sagen, man braucht sehr große Veränderungen, um beim Alten zu bleiben. So sehe ich es zumindest.

*Swartz:*

Ich teile diese Vorstellung. Außerdem bin ich überzeugt, dass unsere westliche Zivilisation das Ergebnis einer historischen Wellenbewegung vom Westen nach Osten ist. Was sich am weitesten westlich abgespielt hat, die Amerikanische Revolution, ist in diesem Zusammenhang wahrscheinlich sogar noch bedeutender als die Französische Revolution, obwohl wir das in Europa natürlich etwas anders sehen. Das Entscheidende ist aber, dass der zivilisatorische Schwerpunkt im angelsächsisch-französischen Bereich liegt. Das ist das Problem für Länder wie Ungarn oder Schweden. Wir sind im Grunde genommen Randvölker, die historisch sehr wenig zu dieser westlichen Zivilisation beigetragen haben. Es ist sehr schmerzlich, das zuzugeben, aber man muss mit sich selbst da ins Reine kommen. Auch die Deutschen haben, im Vergleich zu Franzosen und Engländern, nicht viel beigetragen, erst sehr spät zumindest.



*Nádas:*

Nun ja, wenn man an die Hansestädte denkt und an die Entwicklung einer städtischen Kultur, die sich mit ihr verknüpft, dann können wir weder Deutsche noch Schweden ganz außen vor lassen.

*Swartz:*

Das stimmt, die Deutschen haben uns Schweden kultiviert, so wie wahrscheinlich die Ungarn auch von den Österreichern kultiviert wurden. Diese Erkenntnis entkräftet aber nicht das Hauptproblem, das darin besteht, dass zivilisatorische Errungenschaften sich von Westen nach Osten ausbreiten, nicht umgekehrt. Diese Zivilisation ist praktisch etwas, das auf uns zugekommen ist, das wir übernommen haben – und diese Übernahmeprozesse haben oft hunderte von Jahren gedauert. So etwas hören Ungarn oder Rumänen oder Schweden oder schon gar Russen überhaupt nicht gern, obwohl es stimmt. Mit dieser Feststellung wird man in Ungarn keine Wahlen gewinnen. Vielmehr gibt es dann eine Gegenbewegung, in der es heißt: „Nein, wir waren schon etwas, bevor die westliche Zivilisation uns erreichte – und darauf bauen wir auf und daraus machen wir Politik!“ Die Konfrontation mit der westlichen Zivilisation und den Dynamiken, die sie mit sich bringt, provoziert häufig diese Reaktion, eine Art von Fundamentalismus, bei dem man sich auf das besinnt, was man immer schon hatte. Aber was man hatte, war in Wirklichkeit sehr wenig. Darf man das so offen sagen?

*Nádas:*

Nein, du hattest vielleicht sehr wenig. Ich hatte sehr viel.

*Raabe:*

Zeichnen Sie beide hier nicht das Bild eines sehr starren Europa, eines Europas, das sich in den vergangenen zwanzig Jahren doch ganz anders dargestellt hat? Man könnte dem historischen Zivilisationsmodell von Szűcs beispielsweise das des Arabisten sowie Platon- und Aristoteles-Kenners Rémi Brague gegenüberstellen, der an der Sorbonne gelehrt hat. Brague hat von einem exzentrischen Europa gesprochen, dessen Stärke darin liege, sich das jeweils Andere und Fremde anzueignen, so wie beispielsweise bereits das antike Rom sich die Errungenschaften Griechenlands angeeignet hat. Was Ihr Zwiegespräch vor 20 Jahren auszeichnete, war doch genau das, nämlich dass sie damals versucht haben, voneinander zu lernen. Und diese Art von Stoffwechsel ist in den letzten zwanzig Jahren bei sehr vielen Menschen in Gang gekommen, er hat diesen Kontinent verändert. Dass jetzt neue Probleme und Konflikte auftauchen, denken wir an Ungarn, ist unbestritten, deren Herkunft müsste man aber doch genauer beschreiben, anstatt nur auf historische

Kontinuitäten zwischen Arm und Reich oder Strukturiertem und Unstrukturiertem zu verweisen.

*Swartz:*

Darf ich diesen Einwurf so interpretieren, dass die Betonung des Desinteresses, von dem wir gesprochen haben, realitätsfremd sei? Das kann ich nicht nachvollziehen, gerade nicht zu einer Zeit, da Griechenland fast im Begriff ist, Europa zu zerstören. Das eigentliche Problem bei dieser Griechenland-Krise liegt doch nicht darin, dass über lange Zeit mit Geld um sich geschmissen wurde. Vielmehr haben wir uns über Jahrzehnte hinweg einfach nicht darum gekümmert, was in diesem Land und dieser Gesellschaft vor sich geht. Wir hatten doch keine Ahnung, wie man dort lebt, was die Menschen tun und unterlassen, wie ihr Verhältnis zur Arbeit ist und welche Erwartungen sie an das Leben richten. Das ist echtes Desinteresse, aus dem die jetzige Krise erwachsen ist. Daher verstehe ich diese rosigen Vorstellungen von Austausch und vom voneinander Lernen nicht. Natürlich könnten die Menschen voneinander lernen, wenn sie es wirklich wollten, aber sie tun es ganz einfach nicht.

*Raabe:*

Was mich stört, sind die allzu pauschalen Urteile. Die Faszination des Zwiegesprächs lag doch gerade darin, dass Sie damals nicht wie Politiker gesprochen haben, sondern als sensible Objekte, als Literaten, die sich Gedanken darüber machen, wie sie als Personen von der historischen Situation in ihren Hemisphären individuell geprägt worden sind.

Péter Nádas, Sie haben geschrieben: „Ich bin in Ruinen aufgewachsen unter Versehrten. Ich bin selbst ein versehrter Mensch.“ Die gesamte, gewaltige Schreibarbeit Ihres Lebens ist ja nichts anderes gewesen, als der Versuch, mit dieser Versehrtheit zurechtzukommen. Diese Versehrtheit hat auch Ihre gegenseitige Wahrnehmung bestimmt, die Reaktionsweisen, die ins Unbewußte reichen, die Reflexe. Sie haben damals von Ihrem „eingefleischten Gefühl, schuldig zu sein“ gesprochen. Im Unterschied zu Richard, der als Westmensch weiß, dass die Institutionen des Rechtsstaates ihn schützen, ist Ihnen dieser Gedanke fremd. Zum Beweis erzählten Sie damals, wie sie einmal in West-Berlin von einem Polizeihund angesprungen wurden. Ihre spontane Reaktion: „Ja, richtig, das musste ja kommen!“ Richard Swartz hat Ihnen ihre Reaktion, ihren Mangel an Empörung, damals im Zwiegespräch zum Vorwurf gemacht. Er hielt Ihr Verhalten für inakzeptabel.

Das sind die Dinge, dich mich interessieren. Ich wüsste gerne, ob diese Reflexe in Ihnen beiden noch lebendig sind, oder ob sich in den zwanzig Jahren seit 1989 in dieser Hinsicht etwas geändert hat.

*Nádas:*

Wahrscheinlich haben die wenigsten im Publikum das Buch gelesen oder die Anekdote in Erinnerung, also werde ich sie kurz rekapitulieren: Ich gehe auf einer Straße in West-Berlin und plötzlich werde ich aus einer Ecke von einem Polizeihund angegriffen. In der letzten Sekunde, bevor der Hund mir die Nase abbeißen kann, wirft sich der Polizist, der zuvor wahrscheinlich geschlafen hatte, dazwischen und ringt den Hund zu Boden. Ich habe Richard diese Situation geschildert und kam zu dem Schluss, dass nichts Weltbewegendes passiert war. Der Hund hat meine Nase eben nicht abgebissen, sie ist genauso lang wie früher. Richard konnte meine Sichtweise des Geschehens einfach nicht nachvollziehen. Er verstand nicht, warum ich dem so gleichgültig gegenüberstand und mich nicht mehr empört habe. Aber meine Reaktion ist eben von meinen eigenen Verletzungen geprägt, die aus einer historischen Situation erwachsen sind. Ich bin noch während des Zweiten Weltkriegs in einem der betroffenen Staaten geboren worden, Richard erst nach Ende des Krieges in einem Land, das neutral geblieben war. Als ich ein Kind war, fuhr ich mit einem Schlitten, mit dem meine Eltern einst Tote eingesammelt und transportiert hatten. Dann habe ich die Verhafteten, die Gequälten und die Hingerichteten während des ungarischen Aufstandes 1956 gesehen. Meine Eltern waren als überzeugte Kommunisten für das, was damals geschah, auch zum Teil verantwortlich. Das ist der Grund, warum ich die Geschichte mit dem Polizeihund ganz anders erlebt habe, als das bei Richard der Fall gewesen wäre. Unsere Reflexe sind völlig unterschiedlich aufgrund der unterschiedlichen Umstände, in denen wir aufwuchsen. Ich habe damals ganz einfach nicht verstanden, warum Richard sich so darüber aufgeregt hat, dass ich nicht protestiert hatte. Heute, zwanzig Jahre später, verstehe ich das besser.

Dennoch, im Grunde genommen haben sich meine Ängste nicht sehr verändert. Ich halte Freiheit für eines der wichtigsten zivilisatorischen Güter, die es überhaupt gibt. Ein Teil davon ist politische Freiheit, die wir schaffen oder eben nicht schaffen. Was ich damals nicht vollkommen begriff, was Richard mir jedoch nahezubringen versuchte, war, dass Freiheit auch sehr kalt ist. In Freiheit zu leben, heißt, Kälte zu erfahren. Das habe ich in den vergangenen zwanzig Jahren am eigenen Leib erlebt. Diese Kälte habe ich nun selbst erfahren und erfahre sie jeden Tag.

*Swartz:*

Das wechselseitige Interesse und die Neugier, von der wir gesprochen haben, das Bemühen, von anderen zu lernen – das alles funktioniert nur als individueller Prozess. Als historische oder gesellschaftliche Größe kann man sich darauf nicht verlassen. Es wird immer nur ein einzelner Mensch sein, der diesen Weg einschlägt oder dazu fähig ist. Die historischen und gesellschaftlichen Prozesse werden davon wenig beeindruckt. Veränderungen gehen auf andere Weise vonstatten und sie

dauern sehr lange. Die Schwierigkeit liegt darin, genau das zu begreifen. Wenn sich irgendetwas in die Welt hineingefunden und sich eingenistet hat, sei es Gewalt oder Kommunismus oder Diktatur, dauert es eine sehr lange Zeit, das wieder komplett zu vertreiben. Wie Péter sagen würde, es bleibt in den...

*Nádas:*

In den Knochen.

*Swartz:*

...in den Knochen stecken. Daher gibt es für uns, für Menschen in unserem Alter, nicht so sehr viel Hoffnung, um es einmal brutal auszudrücken. Péter wird immer mit seinen Ängsten leben, ich werde immer mit meinen Ängsten leben.

Aber es kommen ja neue Generationen. Meine Frau ist Kroatin und wir besuchten unlängst Freunde in Zagreb. Wir sprachen über die Vergangenheit, genauer gesagt über Bücher und ihre damalige Bedeutung. Einige der Söhne und Töchter dieser Freunde waren auch anwesend und haben zugehört, worüber sich die alten Leute da unterhielten. Ich erwähnte einen Autor und sagte: „Das war ein sehr schönes Buch, das er damals geschrieben hat, aber er konnte es ja nicht publizieren.“ Darauf reagierte ein junger Mann in der Runde, 17 oder 18 Jahre alt, mit völligem Unverständnis: „Wieso konnte er es nicht publizieren, wenn es so ein schönes Buch war? Das verstehe ich nicht.“ Daraufhin haben wir Älteren in der Runde zunächst ihn angestarrt und dann uns angestarrt. Erst dann haben wir verstanden: So wird man alt. Dieser junge Kroatie konnte einfach nicht nachvollziehen, was Zensur einst bedeutet hatte. Er hat das schlichtweg nicht begriffen, er hatte keine Ahnung. Das war einerseits ein erschreckendes Erlebnis, aber andererseits auch wunderschön.

*Nádas:*

Etwas Schönes kann ich daran nicht finden.

*Swartz:*

Ich sage das nur polemisch.

*Nádas:*

Solche jungen Menschen müssen geprügelt werden.

*Swartz:*

Aber sie haben wirklich das Glück der Ignoranten. Es ist doch herrlich, dass sie in einer Welt leben können, wo man sich um so etwas nicht mehr zu kümmern braucht.

*Nádas:*

Das stimmt allerdings.

*Swartz:*

Er hätte es natürlich wissen müssen, aus anderen Gründen, aber das war für ihn kein Problem. Insofern hat sich also doch schon sehr viel getan.

*Nádas:*

Das ist doch sehr gefährlich. Er lebt in Kroatien, in Zagreb, tagtäglich mit den Folgen der Diktatur konfrontiert und weiß dabei nicht einmal, woher er stammt. Das beraubt ihn doch der Möglichkeit, die Dinge richtig zu reflektieren und zu beurteilen.

*Swartz:*

Da hast du Recht.

*Nádas:*

Das ist schon fast tragisch, aber natürlich ist es auch eine menschliche Reaktion. Die Nachkriegsgeneration wollte über die Kriegsereignisse auch nichts wissen. Der Holocaust und Auschwitz wurden nicht nur von den Deutschen oder von den Ungarn unterschlagen, sondern auch von den Überlebenden. Sie wollten darüber ebenfalls nicht sprechen. Sie empfanden es als fast schon pervers, ihre Kinder mit so etwas zu belasten. Ich kenne Menschen, die das erst viel später aus den Geschichtsbüchern erfahren haben, nicht von den Familienmitgliedern, die es selbst erlebt hatten.

Ein Freund von mir wurde in seiner Jugend von seiner Mutter gezwungen, nicht weniger als drei Fremdsprachen zu lernen. Warum? Die Mutter hatte einst ihr Leben dadurch retten können, dass sie fließend Französisch sprach und sie daher Franzosen in einem der Lager, Auschwitz oder Ravensbrück, ich weiß nicht welches, dazu bewegen konnte, ihr zu helfen. Das ist bis heute eine unglaubliche Last für diese Menschen. Fremdsprachen zu lernen, was wir ja eigentlich als positiv und optimistisch definieren würden, war hier motiviert aus dem Negativsten, aus dem

Glauben, nur so überleben zu können. Mein Freund verstand das ganz einfach nicht.

Die Geschichte besteht aus einer ständigen Bewegung, aus Phasen der Progression und aus Phasen der Regression. Das gehört zusammen, das wechselt sich ab. Was wir jetzt in Europa beobachten, in Griechenland und anderswo, ist eine solche Phase der Regression, eine Regression, die vor den historischen Grenzen nicht haltmacht, sondern West und Ost gleichermaßen betrifft.

*Swartz:*

Ich komme noch einmal darauf zurück, wie schwierig es ist, einen anderen Menschen zu verstehen oder sich ihm zu öffnen, denn es gibt Dinge, über die wir Menschen nicht sprechen können. Das berührt, was Péter über das Schweigen der Überlebenden gesagt hat. Dasselbe trifft ja auch auf Soldaten zu, auf Männer oder auch auf Frauen, die im Krieg waren. Viele reden nicht darüber oder nur sehr ungern. Man fragt sich warum. Sicherlich ist da Schmerz, den man nicht wieder aufwühlen möchte. Es gibt Verdrängung, man möchte ganz einfach nicht daran erinnert werden. Aber ich glaube, sehr wichtig ist es auch, die dialektische Situation des Austausches zu verstehen. Wenn man mit jemandem ein Gespräch führt, gibt es auch eine Voraussetzung, nämlich dass der Andere dazu fähig ist zu verstehen, worüber man redet. Ich kann mir vorstellen, dass es viele menschliche Erfahrungen gibt, die...

*Nádas:*

...die nicht zu verstehen sind.

*Swartz:*

... nicht zu verstehen sind. Ich kann mir gut vorstellen, dass jemand, der im Konzentrationslager war, fast aggressiv sagen würde: „Warum sollte ich mit dem darüber reden? Ihm fehlt die Voraussetzung, etwas zu verstehen.“ Oder wenn ich in Stalingrad war und das mit Glück überlebt habe, warum sollte ich darüber sprechen, wenn ich wieder daheim bin? „Was verstehen die überhaupt davon? Ich habe überhaupt keine Möglichkeit, das an jemanden weiterzugeben, auch nur im kleinsten Maßstab verständlich zu machen.“

*Nádas:*

Hinzu kommt, dass Überleben immer auch bedeutet, dass andere nicht überlebt haben. Das heißt, der Betroffene weiß etwas, das die Nachwelt auch nicht wissen soll, nicht wissen darf. Ich kann niemanden darin einweihen, wie ich einem Sterbenden den letzten Rest seines Brotes oder einem halbtoten Soldaten in Stalingrad

die wärmenden Stiefel weggenommen habe. Das wird nicht eingestanden, das kann man nicht eingestehen.

*Swartz:*

Vielleicht ist das auch eine Frage der Zeit. Könntest du dir nicht vorstellen, dass man irgendwann doch dazu bereit ist, so etwas zu teilen?

*Nádas:*

Nein.

*Swartz:*

Es könnte vielleicht eine Zeit kommen, da man über den real existierenden Sozialismus nicht mehr sprechen will und auch nicht mehr sprechen kann. Denn wie spricht man etwa mit diesem jungen Kroaten in Zagreb, den ich erwähnt habe? Wenn er gar keine Ahnung von Zensur und von der Unterdrückung der Intellektuellen hat, dies nicht mit dem Kommunismus verbindet, hat man dann noch das Bedürfnis oder lohnt es sich überhaupt noch, mit einem solchen Menschen darüber zu sprechen? Ich würde es hoffen, aber ich bin mir diesbezüglich nicht sicher.

*Nádas:*

Diese Möglichkeit schließe ich leider aus, denn dann hätte Hegel recht behalten, die Geschichte wäre an einem Endziel angekommen und wir lebten in der besten aller Welten. Diese Vorstellung ist wahrscheinlich nicht richtig.

*Swartz:*

Ich sehe ein anderes Problem, nämlich dass die Menschen nicht dazu fähig sind, diese Dinge immer wieder durchzukauen, sich ständig mit ihnen zu konfrontieren. Dabei ist die Erinnerung wahrscheinlich die einzige kleine Möglichkeit, die wir haben, zu verhindern, dass wir das Ganze nochmals durchleben müssen. Aber ich habe den Eindruck, die Menschen wollen das nicht, immer wieder an das Vergangene zu rühren. Wir stürzen uns in die nächste Katastrophe, anstatt ein Gespräch darüber zu führen, was war und wie es war. Wir tun es ganz einfach nicht.

Die Deutschen haben es nach 1945 brav und tüchtig getan, aber nur, weil sie dazu gezwungen wurden. Wir anderen hingegen lügen noch immer über die Vergangenheit, ergehen uns in Mythen. Die Polen sagen, sie hätten mehr gelitten als alle anderen. Dann kommen die Juden und sagen: „Entschuldigung, wir sind auch noch da!“ Das empört dann wiederum die Polen. Die Schweden und die Schweizer behaupten, dass sie während des Zweiten Weltkrieges neutral gewesen sind und mit dem ganzen ungeheuerlichen Geschehen nichts zu tun hatten, dabei haben ihre

Staaten sehr viel Geld verdient in dieser Zeit. Die Russen sind davon überzeugt, dass sie ganz alleine Europa befreit haben, dabei war die Sowjetunion zwei Jahre lang Deutschlands wichtigster Alliiertes und sie wäre das wahrscheinlich auch geblieben, hätte Hitler nicht den Angriff befohlen. In Frankreich redet man ständig von der Résistance, dabei waren Franzosen die eifrigsten Kollaborateure. Und so weiter und so fort.

Wir lügen alle, alle lügen wir über die Vergangenheit. Nur die Deutschen nicht. Sie sind die Einzigen, die über die Vergangenheit nicht lügen. Aber nicht etwa weil die bessere Menschen sind, sondern weil die dazu gezwungen wurden, nicht mehr zu lügen. Dieser Zwang ist jedoch die große Ausnahme. Wo er nicht ausgeübt wird, wird eifrig weitergelogen. Also ich sehe das ziemlich schwarz.

*Nádas:*

Ich auch. Wenn man versucht, diese Dinge zu klären, ist das eine sehr schwierige Angelegenheit, bei der man eigentlich neue Begriffe verwenden müsste. Nur gibt man alte, eingefahrene Begriffe nicht gerne auf. Man könnte beispielsweise auch fragen, ob wir gerecht mit dem Begriff des Kommunismus umgehen. Wo gab es überhaupt Kommunismus? Kommunismus ist eigentlich ein scharf umrissener Begriff. Wo herrschten denn in Wirklichkeit Kommunisten? Meine Eltern waren Kommunisten und sie waren nicht die einzigen Kommunisten, die ich kannte. Aber nach einigen Jahren wurden sie aus dem Verkehr gezogen von Kommunisten, die im Grunde Nichtkommunisten waren. Wir sollten viel passender von einer Diktatur sprechen, von einem sowjetischen Imperium. Aber wie gesagt, man gibt die alten Begriffe nur ungern auf, auch den des Kommunismus.

*Raabe:*

Péter Nádas, unmittelbar nach der Wende haben Sie in mehreren Essays über die nationale und die individuelle Selbstbestimmung geschrieben. Das klang damals, in der Wendezeit, hoffnungsvoll. Was ist daraus heute geworden? Warum gibt es gerade in Ungarn, aber auch in Serbien, in Rumänien, anders als in Deutschland, so viele virulente Geschichtslügen? Hängt das miteinander zusammen, dass man national sich selbst bestimmen will und dass man einen erlogenen Mythos dazu braucht?

*Nádas:*

Das hängt eher mit dieser historischen Wellenbewegung zusammen. Nach einer progressiven Phase, die recht lange dauerte, etwa sechs oder sieben Jahre, trat die ungarische Gesellschaft in eine regressive Phase ein. Diese Regression, die gesund und nötig gewesen ist, hält nun aber schon sehr viel länger an und ist auch unnötig tief.



Alles das ist in gewissem Sinne selbstverständlich. Jeder nutzt seine Freiheitsrechte in der Demokratie, auch die Nationalisten und Rechtsextremen. Darauf war ich nicht vorbereitet, dass die Demokratie gegenüber Kräften, die sie unterwandern wollen, ausgeliefert ist, eigentlich schutzlos. Denn wenn Demokratie sich schützen würde, dann wird sie zur Diktatur oder nimmt zumindest die Züge einer Diktatur an. Es handelt sich also um eine Gratwanderung.

In Deutschland verbindet man die Veränderungen von 1989 hauptsächlich mit dem Mauerfall. Bei uns in Ungarn ist keine Mauer gefallen, daher spricht man vom Systemwechsel. Bei diesem Systemwechsel wurde auch unsere alte Verfassung reformiert. Die Personen, die dafür verantwortlich gezeichnet haben, einige davon Freunde von mir, hatten häufig an amerikanischen Universitäten studiert und zum Teil auch gelehrt. Sie waren stark beeinflusst vom amerikanischen Freiheitsverständnis und das spiegelt sich in der neuen Verfassung, in der viele Elemente des amerikanischen Politik- und Rechtssystems übernommen worden sind. Nur vergaß man dabei, welche Traditionen, auch rechtliche Tradition, die ungarische Gesellschaft selbst hat. Die Progression ist also zu weit gegangen, hatte negative Seiten. Das hatte die jetzige Regression zur Folge. Das meine ich mit dieser historischen Wellenbewegung.

*Swartz:*

Ich sehe es ein bisschen anders. Wie zuvor bereits betont, Demokratie und Wohlstand, das alles braucht Zeit. Es kommt nicht von einem Tag auf den anderen. Dessen war man sich in Osteuropa nicht bewusst und das hat am Ende zu einer Enttäuschung geführt. Man hatte es sich anders vorgestellt. Es sollte alles viel schneller kommen. Aber es kommt eben nicht so schnell.

*Nádas:*

Schnell und vor allem automatisch.

*Swartz:*

Ja, das ist ein wichtiges Wort in diesem Zusammenhang, automatisch. Wenn wir von der Mangelwirtschaft zur Marktwirtschaft übergehen, dann lösen sich alle Probleme von alleine, dann sind Wohlstand und Demokratie die logische Folge. Das war die Vorstellung.

*Nádas:*

Eine sehr amerikanische Vorstellung.

*Swartz:*

Wahrscheinlich. Wenn man dann am eigenen Leib spürt, dass es nicht so schnell und automatisch geht, dann entwickeln sich Enttäuschung und Frustration. Daraus entsteht die besagte Regression, der Rückfall auf das, was einem vertraut ist. Nur ist das jetzt nicht mehr Kommunismus, sondern Nationalismus. Der Nationalismus ist eine Ideologie für frustrierte Völker und Menschen. Er hat mit der Wirklichkeit der modernen Welt nichts zu tun. Es ist ein Weg, den man eigentlich nicht begehen kann. Aber viele, die enttäuscht sind, verfallen doch darauf, denn der Nationalismus hat seine Vorteile. Beispielsweise ist immer jemand anderes an einer Misere schuld. Man selbst trägt keine Verantwortung, weder als Gesellschaft noch als Individuum. Die Vorstellung ist, dass, wenn man denjenigen, der verantwortlich oder schuldig ist, ausmerzen kann, dann wird alles rosig und schön. Der Nationalist braucht und sucht also immer einen Feind. Ohne diesen Feind kann er nicht existieren.

Das erklärt viele der Dinge, die etwa heute in Ungarn vor sich gehen. Im Westen sind viele gerade von dieser Entwicklung in Ungarn überrascht worden, zum Teil weil die Sprachbarriere bei diesem Land so hoch ist. Das ist wirklich eine dieser Grenzen, die geblieben sind. Das Schlimmste, was in Ungarn passiert, ist diese Identifizierung von Feinden, von der ich gesprochen habe. Gerade in dieser Hinsicht müsste die Europäische Union stärker eingreifen.

*Nádas:*

Die Europäische Union hat bisher alles geschluckt, was in Ungarn vor sich gegangen ist. Barroso und Merkel sind einverstanden. Gelegentlich regen sich einige westliche Zeitungen auf, aber diese Aufregung verpufft angesichts der politischen Akzeptanz, die die Veränderungen gefunden haben.

Diese moralische Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber den Verhältnissen in Ungarn habe ich auch zuvor schon beobachtet, in Zeiten der Diktatur, als János Kádár eine Art Vermittlerrolle zwischen Ost und West einnahm. Willy Brandt hat sich ganz gut mit Kádár verstanden. Die kleine demokratische Opposition in Ungarn, die störte nur bei dem Versuch der westeuropäischen Linken, eine Verbindung zu den Kommunisten in der Sowjetunion aufzubauen. Als Brandt und Kádár nach ihren erfolgreichen Verhandlungen miteinander tanzten, durchaus im wörtlichen Sinne, war man sich bezüglich der Beurteilung der ungarischen Demokraten sehr einig: „Was wollen diese Menschen überhaupt? Warum regen sich die so auf? Das sind doch Verrückte!“

Die Geschichte hatte ihre eigene Logik. Ich habe nichts gegen die Verhandlungen, die Willy Brandt mit János Kádár oder die Helmut Schmidt mit Erich Honecker führten. Diese Verhandlungen haben einen Dritten Weltkrieg verhindert und das war strategisch wichtiger. Aber sie fanden eben immer statt hinter dem Rücken einer kleinen demokratischen Opposition, im Falle Polens sogar hinter

dem Rücken einer großen demokratischen Opposition. Dieser Wahrheit muss man sich heute stellen, also hinter die Kulissen der Lügen und Spiele und des Theaters, die es früher gab, blicken. Das wird nicht immer akzeptiert. Als ich einmal einen Vortrag bei der Deutschen Bank in Frankfurt hielt und diese Dinge ansprach, hat mich die anwesende Witwe von Brandt schwer dafür angegriffen. Erst beim anschließenden Abendessen haben wir uns dann versöhnt.

*Raabe:*

Wir möchten die Zwiesprache jetzt zum Publikum hin öffnen. Es sind ja sehr viele wichtige Themen angeklungen, und vielleicht gibt es dazu Fragen oder Kommentare?

*Frage:*

Herr Nádas und Herr Swartz, sie haben sich in der Zwiesprache sehr ausführlich darüber unterhalten, dass Freundschaften in Osteuropa und in Westeuropa unterschiedlich funktionierten. Diese Vorstellung artikuliert sich ja sehr oft, nämlich dass es einen engeren Zusammenhalt zwischen Freunden und Bekannten in Osteuropa gab. Herr Swartz betonte damals sogar, dass er das beneide. Woraufhin Herr Nádas sagte: „Wir sind immer nur eine Notgemeinschaft. Stell dir darunter nicht so etwas Schönes vor!“ Hat sich das verändert, ist es gleichgeblieben? Wie führt man heute Freundschaften in Osteuropa?

*Nádas:*

Das ist eine schwierige Frage, weil Freundschaften oder Liebschaften zu den Dingen gehören, die durch das politische Geschehen nicht richtig veränderbar sind. Ich würde nicht behaupten, dass es gar keinen Einfluss gibt, aber im Kern sind solche Verbindungen unveränderbar oder doch zumindest nur langfristig veränderbar. Dieser Hang zu Notgemeinschaften oder zum Familiären, das ist geblieben. Aber die Kontakte sind kühler geworden, zurückhaltender. Man wird vorsichtiger. Früher spielte es für mich keine Rolle, welchem meiner Freunde ich welche Frage stellte oder wie ich eine an mich gerichtete Frage beantwortete. Heute überlegt man doch häufiger, ob man eine bestimmte Frage überhaupt stellen oder wie man eine Frage beantworten sollte. Das ist auch eine Gefahr, die mit der Freiheit kommt. Freiheit ist gefährlich, aber Diktatur ist noch gefährlicher.

*Swartz:*

Ich weiß gar nicht mehr, was da genau im Buch steht, aber für mich sind Freundschaften nicht abhängig von politischen Systemen. Das heißt, vielleicht mit einer Einschränkung, die mit der Dimension der Zeit zu tun hat. Wie vieles, das wichtig

ist im Leben, brauchen auch Freundschaft und Liebe Zeit, um sich zu entwickeln. Das war der große Unterschied zwischen West- und Osteuropa damals: In Osteuropa hatte man sehr viel Zeit. Das traf im Westen überhaupt nicht zu, teilweise mit verheerenden Folgen. Natürlich gab es andere Einflüsse im Osten, die zerstörerisch auf Freundschaften wirken konnten, aber Zeit hatte man. Ich erinnere mich immer noch mit Freuden daran, wie oft und freundschaftlich ich in Osteuropa aufgenommen wurde und wie viel Zeit die Menschen sich für mich nahmen.

Manchmal gab es sogar die Möglichkeit, sich zu revanchieren, wenn Freunde in den Westen reisen durften und mich in Wien besuchten. Aber dann stellte sich immer auch schnell ein riesiges Problem ein, weil diese Freunde Vorstellungen von dieser gemeinsamen Zeit hatten, die ich nicht oder nur unter äußersten Anstrengungen erfüllen konnte. Denn sie waren davon ausgegangen, dass ich ewig für sie da sein und mit ihnen etwas unternehmen würde – was ich aber nicht konnte. Gelegentlich hat das sogar zu regelrecht peinlichen Situationen geführt.

*Nádas:*

Ab und zu auch zu komischen Situationen.

*Swartz:*

Komisch, ja. Aber für dich habe ich ja immer eine Ausnahme gemacht.

*Nádas:*

Wirklich? Ich erinnere dich da an die Zeit, als ich deine Gastfreundschaft drei Wochen strapazieren musste, weil ich in Wien auf ein Visum wartete. Du hast mir damals einfach nicht erlaubt, ohne das Visum abzureisen. Aber diese Art von Besuchen ist schon nach wenigen Tagen eine Belastung, um wie viel mehr nach drei Wochen!

*Swartz:*

Ja, das war zugegeben echt zu lang. Ich habe dir mehrmals auf meine diskrete Art und Weise angedeutet, dass du wieder abhauen solltest, aber du hast es nicht begriffen.

*Nádas:*

Nicht begriffen, ja. Gut, dass du es jetzt zumindest sagst.

*Frage:*

Sie haben Zweifel angemeldet, ob die Freiheit, die man jetzt nutzen kann, die Möglichkeit, sich ohne Probleme zu besuchen und kennenzulernen, wirklich zu einem besseren wechselseitigen Verständnis führt. Nach meiner Erfahrung ist das aber so. Ich habe als Student in meiner Zeit in Amsterdam Menschen aus Slowenien und Polen und Tschechien gut kennengelernt, was unter den früheren politischen Verhältnissen nicht möglich gewesen wäre. Dieses Kennenlernen hat mir ein besseres Verständnis dieser Länder und ihrer Gesellschaften eröffnet. Auch die Konferenz, zu der wir uns hier versammelt haben, findet ja in diesem Geiste statt, nämlich dass Dialog zu Verständigung führt.

*Nádas:*

Natürlich ist das eine sehr große Hoffnung. Es ist auch die einzige Möglichkeit. Das ist ja gerade, was Freiheit ausmacht, diese Option, zu reisen und sich auszutauschen. Im Laufe der Zeit führt das sicher auch zu Veränderungen. Das bedeutet aber nicht, dass die historischen Unterschiede, von denen wir gesprochen haben, einfach so verschwinden werden, denn das sind stärkere Einflüsse. Dennoch, wenn die Unterschiede zumindest überbrückt werden und man sich verständigen kann, dann ist das schon eine sehr große Leistung. Und für einen jungen Menschen wie Sie ist es das Natürlichste überhaupt.

*Frage:*

Das Desinteresse, das Sie angesprochen haben, ist das wirklich etwas, das typisch für die west-östliche Dimension ist, oder handelt es sich dabei nicht doch um ein allgemeineres Problem, das sich auch innerhalb des Westens manifestiert? Meiner Beobachtung nach interessieren sich die Menschen hier genauso wenig für das, was Herr Berlusconi in Italien treibt, wie dafür, was Herr Orbán in Ungarn macht. Das ist doch eine ähnliche Konstellation, aus meiner Sicht zumindest.

*Nádas:*

Ich habe sehr früh die Erfahrung gemacht, bereits 1968, dass die historischen Entwicklungen in ganz Europa recht ähnlich ablaufen, unabhängig davon, in welcher Materie sie sich abspielen. Es ist überhaupt kein Zufall, dass in ganz verschiedenen Gesellschaften zur gleichen Zeit kleine ‚Diktatoren‘ mit sehr ähnlichen Charakterzügen auftauchen. Man könnte in diesem Zusammenhang auch die Namen Sarkozy und Putin anführen. Wir haben es mit sehr ähnlichen Charakteren zu tun, die aber in Gesellschaften mit ganz unterschiedlichen Voraussetzungen in Erscheinung treten. Diese Parallelen sind sehr interessant.

Auch das Verhalten der einfachen Bürger ist in diesem Zusammenhang hervorzuheben. Italien und Griechenland – das sind Urlaubsländer. Die Menschen

fahren dorthin, um sich zu erholen, um sich zu amüsieren. Sie wollen sich von dem, was in diesen Ländern vorstättengeht, nicht dabei stören lassen. Und das ist das gute Recht dieser Menschen, denn sie haben ihren Urlaub bezahlt, dürfen also mit einem Gegenwert rechnen. Wer in diesen Ländern gerade Ministerpräsident ist, das ist diesen Menschen gleichgültig. In diesem Sinne hat jeder auch persönliche Verantwortung – und diese Verantwortung kann nicht auf Regierungen oder Parteien abgeschoben werden.

*Frage:*

Herr Nádas, könnten Sie die Vorstellung, dass Freiheit auch Kälte bedeutet, noch ein bisschen konkreter erläutern?

*Nádas:*

Das diesbezügliche Zitat aus der Zwiesprache stammt eigentlich von Richard. Allerdings hatte ich damals schon eine gewisse Vorstellung, was damit gemeint ist. Der Begriff der Freiheit hat zwei Seiten. Einerseits bezieht er sich auf die innere Freiheit, andererseits auf die politische Freiheit. In beiden Fällen aber geht Freiheit mit individueller Verantwortung einher, die nicht aufgegeben werden kann. Bei politischen Entscheidungen übertragen wir diese Verantwortung auf Parteien, Regierungen, Gemeinderäte und so weiter. Aber diese Übertragung verantworten wir selbst, dem können wir nicht entkommen. Das impliziert auch, dass wir uns den Folgen zu stellen haben, unabhängig davon, wie diese aussehen. Diese Konfrontation mit der eigenen Verantwortung kann sehr hart sein. Das ist ähnlich wie im Protestantismus, wo Gott diese Verantwortung auch nicht einfach von uns nimmt. Luther und Calvin hatten diesbezüglich verschiedene Vorstellungen in den Details, aber in den Grundfragen waren sie sich einig. Hier in Deutschland sind sogar die Katholiken von dieser Vorstellung beeinflusst worden.

*Frage:*

Herrn Swartz, Sie haben den Faktor Zeit mehrfach angesprochen. Wie viel Zeit, denken Sie, hat die junge Generation, um das friedliche Projekt Europa weiter voranzutreiben?

*Swartz:*

Ich kann, will und darf hier nicht als Lehrer der Jugend auftreten. Ich war gestern jung, heute bin ich es nicht mehr. Alles geht so furchtbar schnell. Das ist das Einzige, was ich dazu sagen kann. Oder vielmehr, ich könnte das mit einer Anekdote beleuchten:

Als die Franzosen 1989 den 200. Jahrestag ihrer Revolution feierten, gab es eine große Konferenz von Experten in Paris. Zu den Teilnehmern zählte auch ein chinesischer Historiker, ein älterer Herr, der in Fachkreisen sehr berühmt war. Jedoch hat er sich tagelang überhaupt nicht geäußert, während seine Kollegen auf dem Podium dies und jenes über die Revolution gesagt haben. Am letzten Tag der Konferenz ist dann der Vorsitzende an ihn herangetreten mit der Bitte, doch auch etwas zum Thema beizusteuern. So hat er dann, sehr höflich, das Wort ergriffen und gesagt, dass er mit großem Interesse die Beiträge seiner Kollegen zur Französischen Revolution verfolgt und dabei auch sehr viel gelernt habe. Dann fügte er hinzu: „Ich selbst möchte mich aber nicht zu diesen Dingen äußern, denn in meinem Land sind 200 Jahre eine viel zu kurze Zeit, um über ein solch wichtiges Ereignis irgendetwas zu sagen.“

*Frage:*

Wenn wir versuchen, das Transkulturelle auf der persönlichen Ebene zu verorten und auf das eigene Erleben schauen, wie sich Identität da immer wieder verändert und neu bestimmt, wie sehen Sie selbst heute diese Vorstellung von ‚Ostmenschen‘ und ‚Westmenschen‘, wie sie in Ihrem damaligen Gespräch anklang? Wirkt dieser Gegensatz noch in Ihnen fort? Oder hat sich in der langen Zeit seit 1989, zuhause oder auf Reisen, nicht doch eine Vermischung der Identitäten eingestellt?

*Swartz:*

Dieses Begriffspaar ‚Ostmensch‘-, ‚Westmensch‘ hatte damals vor allem die Funktion einer Provokation, um bestimmte Dinge besser zu verstehen. Allerdings denke ich, dass diese Gegenüberstellung auch recht tauglich ist. Diese Unterschiede existierten damals und sie leben auch weiter fort. Es gibt kleine Regungen, filigrane Reflexe des Herzens oder des Bewusstseins, die in der Tat auf die grundverschiedenen historischen Erfahrungen der Menschen zurückgehen. Nach meiner Einschätzung werden diese Unterschiede da sein, solange ich lebe. Wie es sich diesbezüglich bei der jüngeren Generation verhält? Die Hoffnung ist natürlich, dass diese Unterschiede bei Auffassungen und Reaktionen im Laufe der Zeit verschwinden werden. Aber, um diesen Aspekt noch einmal anzusprechen, solche Umstellungen dauern sehr, sehr lange. Ich wage nicht vorauszusagen, wie lange junge Menschen in Europa noch mit solchen Phänomenen leben müssen. Das weiß ich ganz einfach nicht. Jedoch sind die Voraussetzungen geschaffen, um sie zu überwinden.

*Nádas:*

Wir hatten diese Begriffe ‚Ostmensch‘ und ‚Westmensch‘ in Anführungszeichen gesetzt und ironisch verwendet. Sie sind nicht bierernst zu verstehen wie etwa politische Fachtermini. Die Zwiesprache fand zwischen zwei Menschen statt, die

sich nahestanden, die gelegentlich also auch grobe Begriffe verwendeten, um etwas provokativ zu veranschaulichen. Ich würde diese Begriffe heute eigentlich nicht mehr in den Mund nehmen wollen, auch aus pädagogischen Gründen. Sie wirken wie eine faule Ausrede, mit der man eigene Unfähigkeit verschleiern will.

*Swartz:*

Man kann es so machen wie meine kroatische Frau und ich, wenn wir miteinander zanken, auf Englisch oder auf Kroatisch oder auch auf Schwedisch. Dann sagt einer von uns beiden zwangsläufig irgendwann: „Ja, du bist auch einer von denen!“ Das ist geographisch und damit historisch nicht so spezifisch wie ‚Ostmenschen‘ und ‚Westmenschen‘ und daher vielleicht ein wenig neutraler.

*Nádas:*

Im Gegensatz dazu ist das Begriffspaar ‚Ossi‘-, ‚Wessi‘, wie es in Deutschland verwendet wird, überhaupt nicht harmlos oder ironisch oder leichtfüßig. Es ist vielmehr sehr ernst zu nehmen – und wird natürlich auch falsch verwendet. Obwohl die Unterschiede noch heute vorhanden sind. Berlin besteht bis heute aus zwei Städten.

*Raabe:*

Ich möchte mich herzlich bei Péter Nádas und Richard Swartz für diese Fortsetzung Ihrer Zwiesprache aus dem Jahr 1989 bedanken. Es war ein mäanderndes, schönes, lebendiges, spontanes Gespräch, auf seine Weise transkulturell und europäisch. Was einen wirklich in die Verzweiflung treiben kann, das klang mehrmals an, ist nicht nur die Schutzlosigkeit, sondern vor allem die Dummheit. Gegen die Dummheit gibt es ein Mittel: Lesen. Lesen Sie die Bücher von Péter Nádas und Richard Swartz!



# European identity contested?

Bassam Tibi

## 1.

Let me start my reflections with an anecdote: In 1995, I was Visiting Professor at India International Centre in Delhi. As a farewell the institution arranged a party for me the night before I was leaving. The Director of the Centre asked me: “Where are you going tomorrow?” As I was heading to Cairo to continue my work at Al-Ahram Strategic Center, I replied: “I’m heading to the Middle East.” He started laughing, laughing in a way that his glass fell down and broke. People looked around and asked: “What is going on?” He said: “Professor Tibi is lousy in geography.” And I said: “Why? I’m going to the Middle East.” He said: “But you are in India right now and so you are going west, you are not going east. If you’d go east, you’d go to Japan. But going to Cairo means you are going west.”

By then I realized in that awkward situation that my perspective on the world was shaped by a Eurocentric geography. My country of origin, Syria, is West Asia, whereas Egypt is Africa. I am West Asian, I am Muslim and Arab and I claim to be a European citizen. I’m a German citizen and I believe the European identity is as model inclusive. I’m critical of exclusion and I argue instead for an inclusive identity. In principle European identity is inclusive and not ethnic. In this sense, ethnicity and citizenship are contradictions. A model which is based on the ethnicity of individuals contradicts the realities in our age of globalisation and global migration. In reality, however, Europe is ethnic and does not match with the ideals of its universal inclusive citizen identity.<sup>1</sup>

When you walk through a city like Frankfurt, you see Asians, Africans, Middle Easterners – and very few Germans. When I had first come to Frankfurt in 1962, there were maybe only one thousand foreigners in the city at the time – and most of them were Greeks and Italians, meaning Europeans. Today, 35% of the people who live in Frankfurt are not ethnic Germans. Imagine this, 35%! And they come from 165 nations. So Germany, but also Europe as a whole, is changing as a result of globalisation and global migration. Is Europe in a position to deal with these

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<sup>1</sup> See the contributions to *Ethnic Europe. Mobility, Identity, and Conflict in a Globalized World*, ed. Roland Hsu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010) in particular my chapter “The return of Ethnicity to Europe via Islamic Migration? The Ethnicization of the Islamic Diaspora,” 127-156.

new realities? Is it able to adjust to the changed conditions? This is not meant as a rhetorical question. If an inclusive European identity cannot plausibly be defined in terms of ethnicity, what is the alternative? My proposition is a model based on the concept of civilisation and bridging. I shall explore this idea in the course of the present article and try to answer the question whether this concept is compatible with the changes we observe in the age of globalisation.

## 2.

At this conjunction let me start with addressing the ideology of multiculturalism, which is often brought up in these debates. Professor Will Kymlicka is one of the prophets of multiculturalism in the world. His perspective is a Canadian one, not a European. I am very critical of multiculturalism, because the term is not clearly defined. If you say: “*Ich bin gegen Multikulti*. I am against multiculturalism” in Germany, then you run the risk to be viewed as a person who is against foreigners and against migration. In response, I say in Arabic: “*Astaghfiru li Allah*. I ask God for forgiveness.” How could I be against migration, how could I be against foreigners? I am a migrant, I am a foreigner myself, of course with a German citizenship. The point is that I draw a clear distinction between multiculturalism and cultural pluralism. This point is not well understood in the common debate. People of different cultures can live together peacefully. Of course they can, why not? However, there is one requirement. The requirement is that they need to accept a house order for living together. If you live in a house and you have no order for the house, the tensions would follow and conflict emerges. And the house order, in academic terms, has to be based on a consent to core values. This is my understanding of value conflicts and cross-civilisational bridging as a conflict resolution.<sup>2</sup>

Multiculturalism is cultural relativism that argues: “Anything goes.” Like Prof. Kymlicka does. When we were in Jerusalem five or six years ago, he started arguing for multiculturalism of anything goes including Sharia. Then I questioned his knowledge about the Sharia and I asked him: “Can you be more specific?” His response was amazing. I gave him a lesson in the Sharia, because I’m an expert in this field. Then he realised it wouldn’t work. If you want to live in Europe and you want to practice the Sharia, you would get into a value conflict with all European constitutions on all levels. That is why there must be some boundaries. The difference between multiculturalism and cultural pluralism is this: cultural pluralism approves diversity. However, you need to add that diversity has to be combined with the consent to universal crosscultural core values. These core values are actually very limited: civil society, freedom of belief, gender equality and so on. In the Islamic Sharia, there is no gender equality. So if somebody says: “It is part of my

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<sup>2</sup> For more details see Bassam Tibi, *Islam in Global Politics. Conflict and Cross-Civilizational Bridging* (London/New York: Routledge, 2012).

faith not to consider a woman as equal.” I can only reply: Okay, you can do that in private at home. But when you enter the public square, woman and man are equal. You cannot deny gender equality, if you want to live as a citizen in Europe. The ideal of European identity is based on universal human rights. This is an accomplishment nobody is allowed to deny.

When we talk about European identity, then what are we talking about? And where do we go from here? My mother tongue is Arabic. I was educated in Damascus in school in French and then in English. When I came to Germany in 1962, I spoke not a word of German. But I learned German and it became one of my beloved languages. After all, I have written thirty books in German ever since. When I published my book *Europa ohne Identität*<sup>3</sup>, I added many terms to the German language. I’m very proud of doing that. The term *Parallelgesellschaft*, parallel society, did not exist before, I added it. I also added the notion *Leitkultur*. There was a huge debate in this country about *Leitkultur* from October to December 2000. For three months, all media, all politicians were talking about *Leitkultur* every day. Since I am the one who coined the term in the cited book, I was at the centre of this debate. That is why Angela Merkel by then leader of the CDU opposition party, in a press conference in Berlin in October 2010, quoted me as source of the term. But people got me wrong. They allege that “*Leitkultur, das sind deutsche Sitten und Bräuche*, encompasses German customs and traditions.” My response was: „My god, no!” By *Leitkultur* I mean a consensually accepted value system of a civil society. There are many *German Sitten und Bräuche*, which I disapprove and they could never inspire my model. In short: *Leitkultur* is a European value system. These are not national values. *Deutsche Werte* are national values, they might be good for some Germans, but definitely not for all of them, who prefer to be Europeans and clearly prefer European values. European values are civilisational – and European identity is based on civilisational values. Universal arguments against the relativism of multiculturalism approve a cross-civilizational bridging in an effort to establish shared values of people of different cultures.

### 3.

At this point there is a need to introduce the notion of civilisation and differentiate it from the tainted one used by Samuel Huntington the late distinguished Harvard professor. He was actually the one who brought me to Harvard in 1982. We were friends, but we were also in disagreement and critical of one another. One should speak with respect about people who passed away, but it is simply true that he did not know much about civilisations. Still, his most successful book was *The Clash of*

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<sup>3</sup> Bassam Tibi, *Europa ohne Identität? Die Krise der multikulturellen Gesellschaft* (München: Bertelsmann, 1998).

*Civilizations*<sup>4</sup> preceded by an article of ten pages in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, called “A Clash of Civilizations”<sup>5</sup>, sparked an international debate. Within six weeks, it had been translated into 36 languages. A publisher offered him to develop the ten pages into a book. So the term “clash of civilisation” became very famous. But this was not Huntington’s true field of expertise. Civilisation is a classic term in the humanities, one that has been debated on the highest intellectual level for a long time. I mention only a few of the most important protagonists of this debate. Their most significant contributions, such as Will Durant do not appear in Huntington’s book.

The man who coined the term civilisation is an Islamic philosopher. His name is Ibn Khaldun. He wrote a *Prolegomena*, in Arabic *Al Muqaddimah*, in the fourteenth century. He claimed to be the founder of *ilm al-'umran*,” which means “science of civilisation.” French scholars discovered his contribution as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Another main protagonist in the academic debate on civilisation is Will Durant. He was an American Jew, who, together with his wife, published twelve volumes: *The Story of Civilizations*.<sup>6</sup> The Frenchman Fernand Braudel wrote a *History of Civilizations*. And, finally, one of the greatest European historians, Arnold Toynbee, established the study of civilisation as an own discipline.

When you talk about civilisational identity and relate this to Europe, the thing you have to realise is that there are different levels of building identity. Everyone has an individual identity. I have an individual identity: My name is Bassam. This personal identity is unfolded in in a socialization process in family and education. But I also have a professional identity as an academic. I have a citizenship identity as a German citizen. There is also a pattern of a civilisational identity. For Muslims civilisational identity is Islam. Can one though be also a European, which means averting a conflict between Islam on the one hand, and the West and Europe on the other? This is why most of my academic life has been devoted to harmonising Islam, as a civilisation, not as a faith, with Europe as a civilisation in order to promote a Euro-Islam. Civilisation indeed is a major notion. When I talk about European identity, I speak of it in terms of a European civilisation. Such a thing does exist. European civilisation is an idea, an idea that is documented in the history of ideas, yes, but it is also a reality in history of a European civilisational identity.

In my teaching years in Germany (1970-2009), I made the experience that maybe 90% of my German students and 95% of my American students claim: “The West has always been there.” This is not true. European civilisation actually

<sup>4</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations? The Next Pattern of Conflict,” *Foreign Affairs* 72.3 (Summer 1993): 22-49.

<sup>6</sup> *The Story of Civilization*, eds. Will Durant and Ariel Durant, 12 volumes (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1935-1975).

has a date of origin: It was born in the age of Charlemagne. There is a German book called *Einladung in das Mittelalter*<sup>7</sup>, where it says: “Karl der Große ist der *Be-gründer Europas*” – the founder of Europe and the founder of European civilisation. There are two big epochs of European civilisation. The first epoch lasted from Charlemagne until the beginning of the Renaissance, meaning the sixteenth century. This first big epoch of European civilisation is defined by the term *Christliches Abendland*, Christendom in English. However, we should be more precise about this. The term should actually be Western Christendom, because Eastern Europe, which is also Europe, had a different civilisation. There is a civilisational boundary between Western and Eastern Europe, and the history of both entities is different. Western Christendom later split up into Catholicism and Protestantism, but it is still represented in one civilisation, distinct from the Eastern European civilisation. The second epoch of Western European civilisation, lasting to date, is *das säkulare Zeitalter*, the secular age. Europeans remain Christians, but the values of their civilisation have been secular since the Renaissance. These values are based on Humanism, on Enlightenment, on the ideas of the French Revolution and on modern democracy – not on Christianity. It is very important to underline this point, because we have entered a period where the paradigm of secularity is being questioned. Charles Taylor recently published a book called *The Secular Age*, where he challenges some of our basic notions about the retreat of religion and the dominance of a secular worldview.<sup>8</sup> What lies ahead, I do not know. But to date, Europe is definitely a secular civilisation. Its values are secular as well. The notion of a “post-secular society” is a mere construction.

#### 4.

What are the ingredients of European identity? West Europeans have a common history, they share some core values. Of course, diversity exists. Italy is not Sweden, though both belong to Europe. The same actually applies to Islam. I have lived in Senegal in West Africa and also in Indonesia in South-East Asia. I know both countries very well. The Senegalese people are Muslims and they are black and the Indonesians are Asians. But both share not only the belief of Islam but also being members of the Islamic civilisation as Islamdom. People ask: “You *really* want to put Italians and Swedes in the same boat?” Well, civilisationally, yes. The fact is that, within each civilisation, there is a great diversity, so we encounter both unity and diversity. I again refer to the example of Islam: 1.7 billion people are Muslims and they exist throughout the world and they share the core values of Islamic civilisation. But these values of Islamic civilisations developed historically

<sup>7</sup> Horst Fuhrmann, *Einladung ins Mittelalter* (München: Beck, 1987).

<sup>8</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2007); German edition: *Ein säkulares Zeitalter*, translated by Joachim Schulte (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012).

and are not identical with Islamic faith, though of course both are interrelated. Europe is secular and European values are secular. And within Europe, there is diversity on all levels, but there is also a unity in this, the unity of secular values.

How does Europe survive as a civilisation in the age of globalisation? I shall unfold here a major idea, which has occupied my mind for the past fifteen years or so. The idea sounds odd, but I shall explain it to you. I contend that there is simultaneity, *Gleichzeitigkeit*, of globalisation and fragmentation. And this is what affects European identity at the present in the age of crossing civilisational borders.

I elaborated on this idea in a contribution to the two-volumes *Handbook of Global Communication*, edited by Robert Fortner. Chapter 4 of that book is of mine, and the title of the chapter is “The Simultaneity of Globalization and Fragmentation.”<sup>9</sup> The argument is that Europe is now embedded in a global structure. Globalisation means the shrinking of the world. People have a high degree of mutual awareness nowadays. When you leave after this lecture ends, you go home and may turn on the TV or the radio and you can find out what is going on in the world, for example in countries of the Arab Spring. The Spring has turned into a nasty winter marked by the killing going on in Syria and Libya and elsewhere. You can learn about the crisis in Greece. You can know what is happening in other parts of the world, even without being there. This is a mutual awareness, an interconnectedness that has never existed before in world history to this extent. This is globalisation, but it only covers the structures, the economy, the sphere of politics and media. We have a world economy, we have an international system of states, we have global communication. Despite all of this there is no global culture, there is no *Weltkultur*. This shrinking of the world does not in itself create a unity of outlook. People have a worldview, but it is not shared with the worldview of people of other cultures. Everybody has his or her own worldview. And there is also a civilisational worldview. Civilisational worldviews differ from one another just as much as personal ones do. Higher civilisational awareness of the other does not mean that people share the same value system. And what may follow is inter-civilisational value conflict. Please do not confuse this notion with a clash of civilisations. If you clash with somebody, you cannot talk to one another, because you are at war. But if two parties have a conflict and both are rational, they sit down and negotiate and reach a conflict resolution. Conflicts can be resolved. And in international relations, conflict resolution is one of the basic areas of research and also an important aspect of scholars consulting politics. Nonetheless, Huntington speaks of a clash of civilisations and he is wrong on this. He contends that there is a clash between Islam and the West. I do not share this view.

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<sup>9</sup> Bassam Tibi, “Global Communication and Cultural Particularisms: The Place of Values in the Simultaneity of Structural Globalization and Cultural Fragmentation,” in *The Handbook of Global Communication and Media Ethics*, 2 volumes, eds. Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), volume 1, 54–78.

Among the most gratifying occurrences in my professional life is that the President of Germany, Roman Herzog, awarded me the Cross of Merit 1<sup>st</sup> Class, *Bundesverdienstkreuz Erster Klasse*, in 1995. A few years after the ceremony, Roman Herzog asked me to contribute to his book *Preventing the Clash of Civilizations*<sup>10</sup>, which is a book against Huntington's thinking. Despite all odds, Huntington was such a fine person that, when the book came out in New York in 1999, he gave me a phone call and said: "Bassam, I need to talk to you." And I said: "Of course." We went to the Harvard Faculty Club. And before even saying "Hello, how are you?," he said: "What is your problem? What is the problem of your President Herzog?" I said: "The problem is, we are in disagreement with you." And then we had a glass of wine and said toast. But people defame me in Germany, saying: "Professor Tibi is an adept of Huntington." This is nonsense. I disagree with the late Huntington, but I refuse to join any vilification in loyalty to the culture of a free debate.

I coined the term "inter-civilisational conflict," and my major contribution in English on this topic is: *Islam in Global Politics: Conflict and Inter-Civilizational Bridging*.<sup>11</sup> I received the *Bundesverdienstkreuz* from President Herzog for my mediation and bridging, "Brückenbau," "between the civilisations." It is possible to do that. If you take European identity as a model at face value, it is possible to engage in bridging. And so the idea that I present to you is the following: Cultural fragmentation means that people are not in agreement with regard to values. The world is globalised. There is a shrinking of the world, structurally and in terms of communication. But in terms of values, there is no agreement, there are no shared universal values. Not even human rights are shared. There is a Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but rights are not shared. In 1993, the United Nations organised a huge conference in Vienna to commemorate the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. People were in disagreement in arguing: "There are claims for the existence of Asian human rights, Islamic human rights, African human rights." These claims are expressions of cultural fragmentation. How can one deal with these cultural tensions? I think that we can do the job in engaging in dialogue and by bridging. In this way one can reach a conflict resolution.

## 5.

In the addressed context the question arises: Can Europe maintain its identity in an age of globalisation without risking the exclusion of migrants? Among these newcomers are Muslims, but people also come to Europe from all over the world. In the past I have visited different countries in West Africa, one of them is the former

<sup>10</sup> Bassam Tibi, "International Morality and Cross-Cultural Bridging," in *Preventing the Clash of Civilizations: A Peace Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Roman Herzog (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 107-126.

<sup>11</sup> Tibi, *Islam in Global Politics*.

Belgian Congo. People there know everything that is going on in the world through the media. Once you leave Kinshasa, after a hundred kilometres you are already in a jungle. And there you cannot pay with money, so you exchange clothing for wooden artefacts, wonderful sculptures. Also in Senegal, I encountered young boys: “I give you three shirts and you give me four sculptures and we are in agreement.” I gave them the three shirts. And one of them said: “*Monsieur, vous êtes raciste*. Mister, you are a racist.” I said: “I am sorry, how can you accuse me of an evil like that?” He said: “You are thinking I’m an African, I’m not well informed. Your shirts are old-fashioned.” I said: “I didn’t know that.” But he knew that the colour was not modern. They read the relevant magazines, so they know stuff like this. This is globalisation. The knowledge of these people about Europe and about the prosperity here becomes a source of will to migration. How can Europe manage this?

People want to come to Europe. At least 40 to 50% of the new migrants are Muslims. They flee poverty in their home countries, and also despotic rule. The number has been increasing. In 1950, there were less than one million Muslims living in Western Europe. Today, there are 25 to 30 millions. By the middle of the century, there will be 50, maybe 60 million Muslims living on the continent. Will Europe be able to digest this migration and continue to be European in terms of identity? This is the core question. I participated in a symposium at Berkeley named “Islam and the Changing Identity of Europe.” We published a book on our findings, under the title *Euro-Islam or Muslim Europe*?<sup>12</sup> This book title refers to two scenarios: either Muslims become European and Islam will be Europeanised in the process, or Europe could actually be gradually Islamised in one hundred years as some Islamists envision the future.

Which one is it going to happen? I plead for a *Leitkultur* as a way for Europe to both accommodate in an inclusive manner immigrants – and to maintain its identity. *Leitkultur* does not refer to a homogeneous culture nor to hegemony. *Leitkultur* is rather a guiding culture, based on a cross-cultural consensus between migrants and Europeans over five core issues: democracy, separation of religion and politics, human rights, civil society and religious pluralism.

However, what is actually happening in Europe today is that there is an ethnicisation of Islam. To be sure, Ethnicity runs counter to the idea of integration and citizenship.<sup>13</sup> I am a Muslim from Syria. I am different from a Turkish Muslim or a Senegalese Muslim or a Bengali Muslim. We don’t have the same ethnicity. You can share citizenship, but you cannot be Kurdish and Turkish at the same time.

<sup>12</sup> *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam: Politics, Culture, and Citizenship in the Age of Globalization*, ed. Nezar Alsayyad, symposium “Islam and the Changing Identity of Europe,” Berkeley, 1998 (Lanham, Md, Oxford: Lexington, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> See the reference in note 1 and my article on this subject-matter: Bassam Tibi, “Ethnicity of Fear? Islamic Migration and the Ethnicization of Islam in Europe,” *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* Vol.10, 1 (2010), pp.126-157.



You cannot be African and European in the ethnic sense at the same time. But you can share values, you can share citizenship. Although Muslims do not create an ethnicity there is a progressing ethnicisation of Islam in Europe becoming potentially a source of an “ethnicity of fear,” because it could indeed lead to violent conflicts<sup>14</sup>. There was a warning signal for that. In 2005, there was an uprising in the *banlieues*, the suburbs of the major French cities, which are basically inhabited by Muslims of North and West Africa. It was in fact a Muslim ethnic upheaval, but people refused to take this seriously. Even the French government said that the uprising had nothing to do with Islam. People refused to acknowledge the “ethnicity of fear”, as well as the related conflicts.

## 6.

The conclusion I draw as an international relations scholar, is that Europe’s outlook in the future, is a difficult one. So if you ask me: “What is the future of European identity?”, my answer would be: It depends on ethnic Europeans and on migrants, including Muslim migrants. What is going to happen to Europe in the future? Will people fight each other or will they find a basis of agreement for living together in cross-culturally sharing a value system of a civil society that serves as a *Leitkultur*? I have indicated the alternatives that are presenting themselves as regards Europe’s future identity in the title of my chapter in the Cornell Research Project book *Religion in an Expanding Europe*. I coined the formula “Europeanizing Islam or the Islamization of Europe”<sup>15</sup> in that book published by Cambridge University press. Let’s hope the best for Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

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# How (Not) to Fix European Identity?

Lars Klein

## Does European Identity Matter?

Throughout the ‘European sovereign debt crisis,’ there has been much debate about how to best handle this crisis politically, but little mention of the deeper reasons for why people in other European countries should be prepared to cover the debts of Greece or other troubled states. Politicians have been tending to explain the entanglements of national economies, the dynamics of the currency market and the sheer necessity to come to a European solution. One either might take it as a good sign that there did not seem to be any need for further explanation. Or one might see that many chances have been missed all these years to solidify the basis of European politics. This basis has previously been discussed under the label ‘European identity,’ prominently in the course of the Iraq War of 2003 and the failed referenda on the European Constitution.

This article discusses the debate on European identity in a historical perspective and outlines the ways in which a common identity could be sensed or dismissed. The title refers to both the attempt to pinpoint a European identity and to restore it, as there has arguably been some damage done to the European unification process.<sup>1</sup> The question raised will be: How to trace and to define a common European identity? What for? Would a clear idea of a European identity help to overcome the alleged ‘democratic deficit’ of the European Union? Or would it be better not to fix any European identity and to leave its meaning open for debate?

## No Function beyond Bookkeeping?

The breakdown of the ‘master-narratives’ and the reclaiming of histories and identities have been major issues of postmodern and postcolonial theories.<sup>2</sup> The concept of ‘identity’ has been coined by philosophers, social scientists and psycholo-

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<sup>1</sup> Whenever I speak of ‘European identity’ here, I understand it according to the definition of ‘identity’ given in: Simon Clarke, “Culture and Identity,” in *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, ed. Tony Bennett and John Frow (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 510.

<sup>2</sup> The term ‘master-narrative’ is used according to: Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

gists and has been considered a “growth industry in the academy.”<sup>3</sup> It has been deconstructed, claimed to be fragmented or damaged, even dismissed as such. Although one thus might easily have the impression that this term is a soft one, it is actually nothing the like.

Since its appearance on the European stage in the 1970s, identity has been rather a hard than a soft topic. Independent of all academic debates, the idea to establish a European identity in politics has been pursued as a means to further establish Europe as a world actor.<sup>4</sup> The enforcement of such an identity in the 1970s can be considered a consequence of globalization, as the world struggled with the oil crisis and the financial system experienced major shifts with the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system. European statesmen like the French President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing and the German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt sought to find solutions on European and international levels. And with an “eroding political legitimacy at the national level” during the neoliberal 1980s, “[i]dentity became the concept in this search for compensation.”<sup>5</sup> Ultimately, the “twin notions of civilization unity and cultural diversity,” which have later been translated into “unity in diversity,” gained importance.<sup>6</sup>

The European Union has largely achieved the immediate aims of the European unification process – the reconciliation of nations, security, mobility and, within limits, prosperity. As these achievements are being turned into a ‘lived reality,’ it is held that Europeans got used to them to such a degree that the EU loses its integrating powers.<sup>7</sup> This raises the question about the role the EU can play for Europe as well as beyond. A “Europe that has no function beyond bookkeeping,” Adolf Muschg has warned as early as 2003, “loses its basis as a society of solidarity.”<sup>8</sup> Faced with the ways in which Greece has been forced to cut costs in order to comply with the demands of European and financial institutions, one would have a hard time disagreeing with those who consider the EU a purely economic endeavour or speak of a Europe that was “built in Brussels and Strasbourg” as a “a sort of

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<sup>3</sup> Linda Martin Alcoff, “Who’s Afraid of Identity Politics?” in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M. L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-Garcia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 312.

<sup>4</sup> Aurélie Élisabeth Gfeller, “Imagining European Identity: French Elites and the American Challenge in the Pompidou–Nixon Era,” *Contemporary European History* 19.2 (2010): 146.

<sup>5</sup> Bo Stråth, “A European Identity: To the Historical Limits of a Concept,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 5.4 (2002): 390.

<sup>6</sup> Gfeller, “Imagining European Identity,” 149.

<sup>7</sup> Bettina Thalmeier, “Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer europäischen Identitätspolitik,” in *Europäische Identität: Voraussetzungen und Strategien*, ed. Julian Nida-Rümelin and Werner Weidenfeld (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2007), 175.

<sup>8</sup> Adolf Muschg, “‘Core Europe’: Thoughts about the European Identity,” in *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*, ed. Daniel Levy et al. (London: Verso, 2005), 21.

civilizing power that imposes a certain way of life on indigenous peoples.”<sup>9</sup> In a similar vein, Jürgen Habermas warned of the success of “neoliberal orthodoxy,”<sup>10</sup> which seemed to be achieved with the initiatives by Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy during the ‘European sovereign debt crisis.’ He called for reclaiming “political creative powers on the supranational level.”<sup>11</sup>

On the European level, the financial crisis overshadowed the revolts in many Arab countries, which, interestingly, left European politicians passive, at times helpless in their reactions and again divided. Though these issues raised the question of the underlying principles of European politics, recent debates were less concerned with values and identity but rather with political bodies and ways to enable the EU to deal with the still unfolding crisis. Here, Habermas aimed for a strengthening of democratic institutions and has once again called for speeding up the process of integration.<sup>12</sup> His ideas, however, were in sharp conflict with those of the political elite as represented by Merkel and Sarkozy. Nevertheless, Habermas again underlined his vision of an EU-Europe that stands for an important step in the development of a cosmopolitan world domestic politics.<sup>13</sup>

### Searching for a Basis of European Integration

Most often when a fostered integration is called for, it is by referring to a European identity, which supposedly still is not strong enough to carry a Europe of 27. But what is it that defines Europe; that gives a hint of its identity? And why would it be relevant anyhow to define it? Postmodernists may consider Europe a telling example of the breakdown of master-narratives, as there are 70 plus languages spoken<sup>14</sup> on a continent that has always had many centres and many peripheries.<sup>15</sup> Wolfgang Schmale speaks of a discourse on Europe that was a quest for historical roots that would be “the consequence of a long history rather than its aim or result.”<sup>16</sup> “In other words,” writes Willfried Spohn, “the evolutionary thesis of the making of a European identity states a crucial long-term trend, but this trend has

<sup>9</sup> These words were meant ironically. See Thomas Mergel, “Europe as Leisure Time Communication: Tourism and Transnational Interaction since 1945,” in *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger (New York: Berghahn, 2007), 133.

<sup>10</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Ach, Europa: Kleine politische Schriften XI* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 85 (own translation).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>12</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “Wir brauchen Europa! Die neue Hartleibigkeit: Ist uns die gemeinsame Zukunft schon gleichgültig geworden?” *Die Zeit*, 20 May 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Zur Verfassung Europas: Ein Essay* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 39–96.

<sup>14</sup> Anssi Paasi, “Europe as a Social Process and Discourse: Considerations of Place, Boundaries and Identity,” *European Urban and Regional Studies* 8.1 (2001): 9.

<sup>15</sup> Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, “Modernity and the Construction of Collective Identities,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 39.1 (1998): 140–3.

<sup>16</sup> Wolfgang Schmale, *Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008), 32.

to be contextualized in the complex, contradictory and by no means, predetermined movement of European [...] integration.”<sup>17</sup>

One context in which identity is of major relevance for the EU is its ‘democratic deficit.’ In his smirking text *Brussels, the Gentle Monster or The Disenfranchisement of Europe*, Hans Magnus Enzensberger holds that the ‘democracy deficit’ has been understood as “a chronic deficiency disease that seemingly is not easy to cure,” while it had never been a medical mystery in the first place but rather an intentional policy decision.<sup>18</sup> The voter turnout at European parliament elections does not seem to point to a strong interest of the people in their European representation. But these figures alone do not suffice to substantiate a mere disinterest in Europe. According to Eurobarometer 71 from 2009, 53% of all European citizens considered EU membership of their respective countries a good thing. That was at least 10% more than the voter turnout at the elections for the European Parliament of the same year. In 2010, and thus before the implementation of the European Stability Mechanism and subsequent actions, Europeans had more confidence in the EU with regard to handling the financial crisis than in other national or international bodies; 82% wanted the EU to play an even bigger role.<sup>19</sup> Michael Bruter, among others, has shown that a European identity was actually unfolding.<sup>20</sup> Europe has been identified by a common currency and easy mobility, travels, communication.

This feeling of Europeanness by the Europeans was much-discussed in 2003, when the European Convention presented its draft for a European Constitution. At the same time, a fierce debate on the necessity of a new Iraq War unfolded. Drawing on both, Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida started their famous initiative on *What Binds Europeans Together* and suggested a definition of Europe against an ‘other,’ namely the United States.<sup>21</sup> Processes of ‘othering’ have a long tradition in transatlantic relations and their (mis)understandings as well. In this sense, this idea was not new, neither in form nor in content. Did it get us closer to a definition of ‘European identity’? Habermas and Derrida proposed to widen national

<sup>17</sup> Spohn is referring to Eastern European integration in his text. See Willfried Spohn, “National Identities and Collective Memory in an Enlarged Europe,” in *Collective Memory and European Identity: The Effects of Integration and Enlargement*, ed. Willfried Spohn and Klaus Eder (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 13. Cf. Schmale, *Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität*, 178.

<sup>18</sup> Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Sanftes Monster Brüssel oder Die Entmündigung Europas* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2011), 52 (own translation).

<sup>19</sup> “Eurobarometer 74: Öffentliche Meinung in der Europäischen Union,” Autumn 2010, ed. European Commission, [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb74/eb74\\_de\\_de\\_nat.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb74/eb74_de_de_nat.pdf) (accessed 5 March 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Michael Bruter, *Citizens of Europe? The Emergence of a Mass European Identity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> For the text cf. Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas, “February 15, or What Binds Europeans Together: A Plea for a Common Foreign Policy, Beginning in the Core of Europe,” *Constellations* 10.3 (2003): 291-7.

identities so that they could encompass a European dimension.<sup>22</sup> John McCormick further elaborated on the features it might entail in his discussion of “Euro-peanism.”<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, Europeans seemed united in their opposition against a looming war in Iraq. In order to make their voices heard on 15 February 2003, millions protested against a looming war, among them an estimated one million people in Rome, 10,000 in Zagreb, half a million in Berlin and in London, up to two million in Madrid, 100,000 in New York, and “about thirty people” in Budapest.<sup>24</sup> The figures point at least to two conflicting positions that were based on different experiences: Many, including Joschka Fischer and others, referred to the Second World War in order to explain why they could “not easily go out there and tell my people: ‘Well, let’s go to a war.’”<sup>25</sup> For others, including the authors of the *Letter of Eight*,<sup>26</sup> it seemed more pressing not to alienate the United States that had been guaranteeing European freedom for decades. The initiative proved Isaiah Berlin right in his diagnosis of a “naïve craving for unity and symmetry at the expense of experience.”<sup>27</sup>

How to deal with this situation? The concept of ‘core Europe’ might offer a way out, a concept that was originally outlined by two protagonists of the German Christian Democrats in 1994, Wolfgang Schäuble and Karl Lamers.<sup>28</sup> Habermas and Derrida elaborated on their idea and suggested to focus on those countries that were most likely to adhere to common positions already. This ‘core Europe’ was meant to consist of Germany, France and the Benelux countries. Other member states were welcome to join policy-making processes once they were ready to accept the agreed ‘European’ positions. Eastern European intellectuals in particular felt excluded and reacted with disbelief and anger. To them, talking of ‘core Europe’ meant to cancel the search for a common basis to European politics.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See: Craig Calhoun, “Cosmopolitan Europe and European Studies,” in *The Sage Handbook of European Studies*, ed. Chris Rumford (London: Sage, 2009), 647.

<sup>23</sup> John McCormick, *Europeanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> The figure for Budapest stated according to Esterházy’s own counting. For the figure and his remarks, see Péter Esterházy, “How Big is the European Dwarf?,” in *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War*, ed. Daniel Levy et al. (London: Verso, 2005), 76.

<sup>25</sup> Joschka Fischer (paper presented at the Munich Security Conference, Munich, Germany, 8 February 2003).

<sup>26</sup> Published on 30 January 2003, written by the heads of state of Spain, Portugal, Italy, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Denmark. See: Jose Maria Aznar et al., “Leaders’ Statement on Iraq: Full Text,” BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2708877.stm> (accessed 5 March 2012).

<sup>27</sup> Isaiah Berlin, *Historical Inevitability* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 5.

<sup>28</sup> The paper was issued on 1 September 1994. See Karl Lamers and Wolfgang Schäuble, “Überlegungen zur europäischen Politik,” <http://www.cdusu.de/upload/schaeublelamers94.PDF> (accessed 5 March 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Esterházy, *How Big is the European Dwarf?*

Would that mean to not only have a core group of states but also European features that are to be added to national identities, so that they overlap here and there? Willfried Spohn argues against any dualistic model where one either feels European or is more attached to the nation. He emphasises the constant interaction between many different identities.<sup>30</sup> Bo Stråth adds that Europe, the nation and the region,

constitute three levels of abstraction, which in practice and in politics are entangled. [...] Ideas of belonging are overlapping, inclusive and exclusive in complex and contradictory patterns, where it would be far too simple to put a European identity against national ones. Europe has been and is both an active element of national, and of other identifications and, at the same time, something different and separate from national and other identifications. Europe is both We and the Other.<sup>31</sup>

### **Building on “a new conceptualization of culture and feelings of belonging”**

We are left with the diagnosis that although much has been done in terms of establishing a common European identity – both bottom-up and top-down –, a common conscience of European identity has not been established. What was seen positively by Stråth is formulated in negative terms by Gerard Delanty. He holds that Europeans were not

particularly united among themselves. It is unlikely that they will unite against an Other. If there is not a European self or subject, there cannot be an easily defined Other. There is neither a European state nor a European people, although there do appear to be Europeans. The newly articulated European self-understanding [...] cannot be seen as a unified collective identity based on a pre-existing community linked by a hyphen to the shared political community of the liberal public sphere.<sup>32</sup>

As much as a European public sphere is considered a precondition for an evolving European identity, as much are the difficulties in establishing it overestimated. A minimalist version would mean for national public spheres to open for each other in “osmotic ways.”<sup>33</sup> This opening, of course, rests on the interest for the other and for a European view.

If we understand the difference between political and cultural identity to be similar to Aleida Assmann’s division into political and cultural memory, one could consider political identity as a top-down approach and cultural identity as a more

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<sup>30</sup> Spohn, “National Identities and Collective Memory in an Enlarged Europe,” 4.

<sup>31</sup> Stråth, “A European Identity,” 390.

<sup>32</sup> Gerard Delanty, “What Does It Mean to Be a ‘European’?,” *Innovation* 18.1 (2005): 19.

<sup>33</sup> Habermas, *Ach, Europa*, 108 (own translation).



democratic, the bottom-up approach.<sup>34</sup> Identity is worked on from both ends and it is their interplay that counts – and that is not yet achieved. The ‘democratic deficit’ cannot be levelled out by attaching core values to the EU and its constitutional treaties. In contrast, not fixing a European identity would not equal giving up on Europe but could mean accepting diversity, acknowledging different experiences and different conclusions from them. The basis for European politics thus would be the mere willingness to cooperate out of choice and necessity at the same time, to do so in a way that allows for diversity and in the understanding to aim for unity and peace. These are conditions under which to collaborate that need to be reiterated and substantiated, not by politicians but by the producers of cultural memory: writers, academics, intellectuals. During the ‘European sovereign debt crisis,’ their lacking engagement has been met by the clear choice of politicians to enforce elite decisions. Implicitly, Habermas has diagnosed the silence of intellectuals, when he claimed that there had to be a sense of what is missing and could be different, some fantasy to sketch alternatives and the courage to polarise.<sup>35</sup>

This form of a European identity can only be based on “a new conceptualization of culture and feelings of belonging” that Bo Stråth refers to, of which “[a]mbivalence, transition and being more historically informed are some key elements.”<sup>36</sup> Openness on the margins, the ability to think of and practice borders in a non-linear way, to understand them as spaces of crossover, of mediation and translation, these are the features Wolfgang Schmale names with reference to Etienne Balibar in an eminently positive fashion as Europe’s strengths.<sup>37</sup> There needs to be an arena for an open debate about Europe, for an ongoing “search for equilibrium in unstable niches,”<sup>38</sup> which would be based on restlessness in the attempt to find the “common disquieting element,” as Péter Esterházy writes.<sup>39</sup> If this basis is taken seriously, it cannot be met by a true financial government but by strengthening the European Parliament, by elections, referenda and most of all by open debates.

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<sup>34</sup> Aleida Assmann, “Memory, Individual and Collective,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 210-24.

<sup>35</sup> Habermas, *Ach, Europa*, 84.

<sup>36</sup> Stråth, “A European Identity,” 399.

<sup>37</sup> Schmale, *Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität*, 178.

<sup>38</sup> Muschg, “‘Core Europe’: Thoughts about the European Identity,” 27.

<sup>39</sup> Esterházy, “How Big is the European Dwarf?,” 79.

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# Cosmopolitanism and European Identity

John McCormick

## Introduction

The idea of cosmopolitanism has been revitalized since the mid-1990s as one of a multitude of explanations for contemporary society, taking its place alongside (and overlapping with) such concepts as globalization, multiculturalism, postmodernism, post-industrialism, and late capitalism.<sup>1</sup> Much has been said in particular about the cosmopolitan qualities of the European Union (EU), which Archibugi describes as the “the first international model which begins to resemble the cosmopolitan model.”<sup>2</sup> Roche claims that Europe is “leading the world in the construction of a globally relevant regional international and trans-national order and governance system,”<sup>3</sup> and Delanty argues that to be European is less about culture and politics and more about an orientation to the world that fits with the cosmopolitan spirit.<sup>4</sup>

And yet the debate about the cosmopolitan qualities of the EU has to date been almost entirely theoretical,<sup>5</sup> and little effort has been made to apply cosmopolitan notions to the practical realities of European integration. A modest exception to the rule is offered by Frith, who makes an attempt to see how cosmopolitan principles are reflected in gender issues in the EU and concludes that the issue of gender equality “offers further evidence that cosmopolitan democracy should not be dismissed as simply utopian dreaming [...]”<sup>6</sup> However, cosmopolitan ideas

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<sup>1</sup> For background, see Martha C. Nussbaum, “Kant and Cosmopolitanism,” in *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s Cosmopolitan Ideal*, ed. James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 25-57; Daniele Archibugi, *The Global Commonwealth of Citizens: Toward Cosmopolitan Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> Daniele Archibugi, “Principles of Cosmopolitan Democracy,” in *Re-imagining Political Community: Studies in Cosmopolitan Democracy*, ed. Daniele Archibugi, David Held and Martin Köhler (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 219.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Roche, “Cultural Europeanization and the ‘Cosmopolitan Condition’: European Union Regulation and European Sport,” in *Cosmopolitanism and Europe*, ed. Chris Rumford (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 128.

<sup>4</sup> Gerard Delanty, “What Does it Mean to be a ‘European?’,” *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences* 18.1 (2005): 11-22.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Daniele Archibugi and David Held, eds., *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (London: Routledge 2001); Luis Cabrera, *Political Theory of Global Justice: A Cosmopolitan Case for the World State* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Gillian Brock and Harry Brighouse, eds., *The Political Philosophy of Cosmopolitanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Patrick Hayden, *Cosmopolitan Global Politics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Frith, “Cosmopolitan Democracy and the EU: The Case of Gender,” *Political Studies* 56.1 (2008): 231.

are clearly at the foundation of European positions on human rights, the environment, capital punishment, and conflict resolution, and can also help us better understand European perceptions about the dynamics of the international system and the way that Europe conducts its collective foreign policy. By living for so long so closely to other cultures with other languages and histories and by having learned so expensively the costs of nationalism, Europeans – perhaps more than the peoples of any other societies – have been obliged to learn how to cooperate and to respect differences.

This article is an attempt to apply cosmopolitan ideas to the realities of the European experience, focusing on two areas in which those ideas are relatively clear and in which Europe is distinctive from other parts of the world. The first area concerns attitudes towards patriotism, where the idea of love of country has been sullied by its association with war and conflict and Europeans have moved away from association with states towards association instead with ideas (otherwise known as constitutional patriotism). The second example of cosmopolitan ideas at work in Europe is offered by its preference for multilateralism in international affairs. Regional integration has helped move Europeans away from realist ideas about the self-interest of states and an anarchic global system more towards the idea that states can and should define and defend common interests.

### Understanding cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolites hold that all humans belong to a single community, in which they are subject to the same moral standards and have a responsibility for other humans. Local and global concerns cannot be separated or divorced and, rather than the world being separate from the community or state in which each of us lives, it is in fact the only community that matters. Cosmopolites accept the foreign hospitably, argue that all humans should be treated equally, and emphasize the importance of drawing on different traditions and cultures and of remaining open to other ways of life.<sup>7</sup> David Held defines it as a “moral and political outlook which builds on the strength of the liberal multilateral order, particularly its commitment to universal standards, human rights and democratic values, and which seeks to specify general principles on which all could act” and that could serve as “the guid-

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<sup>7</sup> See discussion in Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), Introduction; Thomas W. Pogge, “Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty,” in *Ethics* 103.1 (1992): 48-75. Simon Caney, *Justice beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6.

ing ethical basis of global social democracy.”<sup>8</sup> For Beck, it is about issues of global concern becoming part of the everyday local experiences of ordinary people.<sup>9</sup>

Cosmopolitanism has conventionally been portrayed as little more than an ideal, compelling in theory (to some) but essentially impractical and impracticable (to others). There were many – from Diogenes and the Stoics to Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers, Voltaire, Bentham, Kant and Marx – who reflected upon the community of mankind and the duties that humans had to all other humans. With the rise of 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalism, however, cosmopolitan ideas were marginalized and were to remain largely dormant until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when they were given new life by the cumulative effects of two world wars and the subsequent threat of nuclear and environmental destruction.<sup>10</sup> Cosmopolitan principles were at the heart of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its focus on rights as the entitlement of all, regardless of race, gender, religion, national or social origin, or the political, jurisdictional, or international status of the country or territory to which people belong. They also underlay the concept of crimes against humanity, whose origins are conventionally traced through the 1907 Hague Convention to the postwar Nuremberg and Tokyo trials.

The end of the Cold War and the widening awareness of the effects of globalization have brought cosmopolitanism to a wider audience, although it is a concept still debated more by philosophers and sociologists than by political scientists or economists. It has been associated with a belief in global political institutions, but this idea of world government is controversial; rather than implying the surrender of sovereignty or security, cosmopolitanism instead expects world citizens to place the welfare of human society above the more narrow pursuit of national interests. In terms of international relations theory, it stands in clear distinction to realism, and is based on what Caney describes as a “society of states” approach, which “maintains that a just global order is one in which there are states and the states accept that they have moral duties to other states.”<sup>11</sup>

That Europe is not yet more routinely discussed in cosmopolitan terms is probably due to unresolved questions over the identity and meaning of Europe and over the character and personality of the EU. The many doubts pertaining to the achievements of European integration have diverted the debate away from the prospects for the kind of supra-European society that cosmopolitanism implies. And yet many Europeans – even if they are not yet necessarily cosmopolites on a global scale – are becoming cosmopolites on a regional scale. Increasingly, they

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<sup>8</sup> David Held, *Global Covenant: The Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 171-8.

<sup>9</sup> Ulrich Beck, “The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 19.1-2 (2002): 17-44.

<sup>10</sup> Derek Heater, *What Is Citizenship?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 136.

<sup>11</sup> Simon Caney, *Justice beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.

believe that local, state, and regional European concerns cannot be separated or divorced and that Europe is as important for their political and economic welfare as the communities or states in which Europeans live or the nations with which they identify. As the hold of the European state declines, as the meaning of nationalism is redefined, and as the focus of citizenship and patriotism changes, so the loyalty of Europeans is shifting away from an exclusive focus on the state or the nation, and is moving towards identity with the ideas and values that Europeans have in common.

### **Patriotism**

If there is one area in which many Europeans have clearly adopted cosmopolitan qualities, it is in regard to patriotism. Defined generally as love of country, patriotism can be value-based (driven by support for the merits and achievements of a country) or egocentric (driven rather less rationally by a personal association – a patriot loves his or her country simply because it is theirs).<sup>12</sup> It has far from disappeared in Europe: in France the tricolour is omnipresent and presidents repeatedly speak of the importance of national pride; in Britain almost any anniversary involving the monarch is an opportunity for an explosion of patriotic fervour; and international sporting contests inevitably lead to much flag-waving. There have also been repeated instances of economic patriotism as Europeans debate the sale of ‘national’ business and corporations to foreign buyers, and – particularly in the wake of the economic downturn of 2007-2009 – much evidence of the ambivalence that many Europeans feel about globalization.

But with such exceptions, there are few Europeans today who are willing to wear patriotism on their sleeves in the way in which their forbears once did. Patriotism has been sullied in Europe by its historical association with nationalism and by its co-option in recent decades by assertive nationalists using national symbols to express their opposition to immigration. So far has this gone in Britain, for example, that the British Union Jack has – absurdly – come to be associated in the minds of some with racism, nationalism, and opposition to multiculturalism. More tellingly, however, patriotism has been weakened by the declining allegiance of Europeans with the states that have for so long been the cradles and the nurseries of patriotism.

Polls reflect the distinctive views of Europeans. The World Values Survey in 2003-04 found that less than half the residents of most European states were “very proud” of their nationality<sup>13</sup>, and when a Pew Global Attitudes survey presented the statement “Our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others,” only 33-40 % of Germans, Britons, and French agreed, compared to 60 % of

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<sup>12</sup> Igor Primoratz, ed., *Patriotism* (New York: Humanity Books, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> World Values Survey 2003-04, at <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org> (accessed June 2009).



Americans.<sup>14</sup> Where Americans are more patriotic and repeatedly describe their country as the greatest on earth, the one most blessed by God, and the one where democracy and the free market allow ordinary people to achieve more with their lives than is possible anywhere else, this comparative and superlative element is almost entirely missing from the utterances of most Europeans. They may take pride and comfort in being Polish or French or Swedish, but they will rarely claim that they have greater opportunities or are more blessed by God.

Patriotism is also often criticized for being too parochial and for encouraging the promotion of state or national interests at the expense of broader and more universal interests. Europeans now not only debate patriotism, but they also debate the object of such patriotism. Against the background of a declining attachment to the state and a growing attachment to the nation, what are the prospects for a new European patriotism? The answer depends upon the extent to which Europeans can be convinced that they have enough in common and that their self-identity need not rest alone on association with states or nations. In this respect, constitutional patriotism holds potential as a means to understanding European perspectives. This is understood as a belief that the universal principles of the democratic constitutional state are the only acceptable basis for identification with a state.<sup>15</sup> While it has been dismissed by some<sup>16</sup> as a useful way of understanding the European experience, it has not yet been explored in more than theoretical terms. Would it be better to not fix any European identity and to leave its meaning open for debate?

### Multilateralism

The European Security Strategy included a call for an international order based on “effective multilateralism,” a phrase that sparked something of a minor firestorm of academic and political debate. The keys to effective multilateralism are rules, cooperation, and inclusiveness as well as the building of a sustainable consensus among states.<sup>17</sup> Since the EU is by definition a multilateral institution, Europeans are familiar with most of its possibilities and pitfalls, and while the results have not always been ideal, to the extent that we learn from our mistakes, Europeans have had much opportunity to learn.

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<sup>14</sup> Pew Global Attitudes Project, *Views of a Changing World* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2003), T59.

<sup>15</sup> Daniel Levy, Max Pensky and John Torpey, *Old Europe, New Europe, Core Europe: Transatlantic Relations after the Iraq War* (London: Verso, 2005), xv.

<sup>16</sup> Mattias Kumm, “Why Europeans Will Not Embrace Constitutional Patriotism,” *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 6.1 (2008): 117–36.

<sup>17</sup> See discussion in John Gerard Ruggie, “Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution,” *International Organization* 46.3 (1992): 561–98; idem, *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

In contrasting American and European perceptions and approaches, Kagan argues that the former “are less inclined to act through international institutions, less likely to work cooperatively with other nations to pursue common goals, and more sceptical about international law [...]” By contrast, he claims, Europeans are quicker to appeal to international law, international conventions, and international opinion.<sup>18</sup> One of the contrasts is evident in the way in which European leaders have placed a premium on cooperation and on the promotion of values rather than of interests. In their approach to numerous problems, including terrorism, arms control, non-proliferation, international trade, the environment, and human rights, the Americans have emphasized self-interest while the Europeans have worked to be more inclusive.

Europeans are also distinctive from Americans in their reluctance to use their militaries other than in situations for which an international mandate – preferably one arranged through the United Nations – has been achieved. To be sure, the United States has worked to build multinational coalitions, as in Korea and during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis, but it has also indicated its willingness to deploy its military even in the face of international opposition; the case of Vietnam comes to mind, as does the US willingness to invade Iraq in 2003 with or without the backing of the UN and thus of the international community. Most EU states rejected the idea of invasion without the backing of a UN Security Council resolution and the Greek presidency issued a statement arguing that it was “committed to the United Nations remaining at the centre of the international order” and that “the primary responsibility for dealing with Iraqi disarmament lies with the [UN] Security Council.” Once the invasion was under way, the EU demanded a central role for the UN in the rebuilding of Iraq. Indeed, the EU-UN relationship has become a key feature in the dynamics of international relations, Eide going so far as to suggest that the EU is “in many ways becoming the UN’s main Western partner.”<sup>19</sup>

Patrick notes the importance of American calculations of exceptionalism (the belief that the US must stand as an example and either encourage others to follow its lead or else go it alone), its domestic institutional structure (with the mandate shared between President and Congress making it harder for the US to assume multilateral obligations), and its sheer power (making it more inclined to lead than to cooperate, and to pursue self-interest where needed).<sup>20</sup> On all three counts, the European view is markedly different: there is no longer a prevailing sense of Euro-

<sup>18</sup> Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 4-5.

<sup>19</sup> Espen Barth Eide, “Effective Multilateralism”: *Europe, Regional Security, and a Revitalised UN* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004), 3. See also the essays in Katie Verlin Laatikainen and Karen E. Smith, eds., *The European Union at the United Nations: Intersecting Multilateralisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Stewart Patrick, “Multilateralism and its Discontents: The Causes and Consequences of US Ambivalence,” in *Multilateralism and US Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, ed. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002).

pean exceptionalism, nor a sense that Europe has a mission to change others in its image; parliamentary government makes it easier for executives to win the support of legislatures for new treaties or strong positions in international organizations; and Europe's self-doubt about its power has combined with the effects of European regional integration to encourage it to work to achieve a consensus rather than rocking the boat.

It has only been relatively recently, notes Maull, that the EU has paid much attention to thinking through how multilateralism can best be promoted at a global level, the key qualification for success, he believes, being "the ability to form and sustain broad-based coalitions."<sup>21</sup> For Brenner, effective multilateralism requires not only broad international support and legitimacy but also the capacity to generate initiatives and the political leadership to set the agenda, define deadlines, mobilize resources, and promote effective implementation.<sup>22</sup> As the tradition of European Cold War deference to external powers fades into history, so the EU in particular is showing its willingness and capacity to pursue all these qualities.

Supporting multilateral cooperation is "a basic principle" of EU foreign policy, declared the European Commission in 2003, and the UN is regarded as the core channel for pursuit of that principle: the EU should consider itself a "driving force" in pursuing UN initiatives on sustainable development, poverty reduction, and international security (while also giving new impetus to UN reform).<sup>23</sup> Eide argues that one of the EU's greatest strengths in recent years has been "its ability to co-opt, enhance and gradually reshape other international organizations." After having seemed to be at odds with many of those organizations in the 1990s, he suggests, it has since come to be accepted as a positive force by reworking the capacities and goals of bodies such as NATO, the African Union, and the Organization for Cooperation and Development in Europe. These advances "have given the EU a strategic reach far greater than its [...] assets warrant."<sup>24</sup>

Because the conventional view is to see power in terms of state interests, and since states have a near-monopoly over the maintenance and deployment of military power, we find it hard to appreciate the possibility that suprastate arrangements might exert significant influence. Multilateralism, in particular, because it demands international agreement and thus the watering down of state positions in

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<sup>21</sup> Hanns W. Maull, "Europe and the New Balance of Global Order," *International Affairs* 81.4 (2005): 786.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Brenner, "Introduction," in *NATO and Collective Security*, ed. Michael Brenner (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 1-5.

<sup>23</sup> European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, of 10 September 2003 – The European Union and the United Nations: The Choice of Multilateralism* (Brussels: European Commission, 2003), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52003DC0526:EN:HTML> (accessed 4 April 2012).

<sup>24</sup> Espen Barth Eide, *"Effective Multilateralism": Europe, Regional Security and a Revitalised UN* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2004), iii.

the interests of reaching collective agreement, is portrayed by hawks as weakness and as a slippery slope to appeasement. But the new dynamics of the international system, in which interests are defined less in state or territorial terms and increasingly in collective terms, fits centrally with – and has been most actively promoted by – Europeanist perceptions about the most effective means for managing and deploying influence. Those means place the emphasis on the tools needed to achieve a democratic and positive peace.

### Conclusions

Cosmopolitanism offers considerable possibilities as a means of tying down and better understanding the European experience. As noted earlier, however, the bulk of the academic discussion has been purely theoretical, with few attempts to move out of the ivory tower into the practical realities of life on the ground for ordinary Europeans. This is unfortunate, not least because of the many questions posed in regard to European identity and of what it means to be European. This paper offers a modest attempt to illustrate cosmopolitan ideas in regard to ideas about patriotism – which illustrate changing Europeans notions about identification with the state – and to ideas about multilateralism – which illustrate changing European notions about the dynamics of international relations.

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# Individual, Collective, Social

## Identity as (Most) Contested Social Science Concept in the Symbolic Interactionism Perspective

Grzegorz Pożarlik

### The Theory...

Conceptualising identity in social science seems a mission impossible as its ontological and epistemological status is subject to a sometimes fierce dispute among scholars representing well-established disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science or international relations. Identity is, therefore, both a contested and a crucial social science concept.<sup>1</sup> It is too complex, too dynamic to be captured within a single theoretical paradigm and it is too important to be given up in scientific inquiry as it appears to be an existential imperative of the human condition to 'have identity' as well as to 'understand identity' as a fundamental dimension of a given form of social order.<sup>2</sup> Marilynn B. Brewer is particularly outspoken in illustrating the ambiguity of identity as a social science concept:

If one naïvely enters a bibliographic database in the psychological and social sciences and searches on the keyword 'social identity,' the result is a dizzying array of citations to books and articles from dozens of different literatures – from psychoanalytic theory to the sociology of social movements. It quickly becomes clear that the term has no single, shared meaning; the problem with trying to extract any common definition is that the term is integrally embedded in separate theoretical structures and literatures with little or no cross-citation or mutual influence. As a consequence, one needs some kind of a

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<sup>1</sup> For further discussion of this problem, see for instance: Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'," *Theory and Society* 29.1 (2000): 1-47; Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt and Bernhard Giesen, "The Construction of Collective Identity," *European Journal of Sociology* 26.1 (1995): 72-102; Lynn Jamieson, "Theorising Identity, Nationality and Citizenship: Implications for European Citizenship Identity," *Sociologia* 34.6 (2002): 507-32; Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Ireneusz Paweł Karolewski and Viktoria Kaina, "EU Governance and European Identity," *Living Reviews in European Governance* 4.2 (2009): 12.

roadmap to negotiate among the different associative paths that lead to and from the concept in its different manifestations.<sup>3</sup>

As it seems evident that we need some kind of such a conceptual roadmap to be able to integrate and synthesise constructively different theoretical approaches to identity studies, one must clarify what is the common ontological and epistemological denominator of such inquiry. Thus, symbolic interactionism could be introduced here as an inclusive and coherent analytical framework for an in-depth inquiry on identity construction as seen from an interdisciplinary perspective.

What makes symbolic interactionism a particularly valuable analytical proposition when studying identity construction in contemporary society, taking into account cognitive ambiguity of the concept? An answer to this question could be found precisely in the condition of contemporary society – in this sense post-modern society with emphasis given to fluidity, ongoing re-interpretations of norms, values, patterns of behaviour that constitute social order. Living in a society, which does not provide a safe haven from pressure of answering the daily existential question of who I am, reinforces temporality and an open-ended character of identity construction. Thus, identity is being formed in a process of permanent redefinition of symbolic meanings of categories, which serve as frame of reference of self-identification. As Stuart Hall argues:

[I]dentity is actually something formed through unconscious processes over time, rather than being innate in consciousness at birth. There is always something ‘imaginary’ or fantasized about its unity. It always remains incomplete, is always ‘in process’, always ‘being formed’. [...] Thus, rather than speaking of identity as a finished thing, we should speak of *identification*, and see it as an ongoing process. Identity arises, not so much from the fullness of identity which is already inside us as individuals, but from a *lack* of wholeness which is ‘filled’ from *outside us*, by the ways we imagine ourselves to be seen by *others*. Psychoanalytically, the reason why we continually search for ‘identity’, constructing biographies which knit together the different parts of our divided selves into a unity, is to recapture this fantasized pleasure of fullness (plenitude).<sup>4</sup>

Symbolic interactionism with its emphasis on changeability and the interactive character of identity construction bridges the gap between behavioural and social sciences in the sense that it integrates the subjective construction of meanings related to self-understanding with the objective (inter)action in the process of defining the ‘self’ through relation to the ‘other.’ This relation becomes an ever more

<sup>3</sup> Marilynn B. Brewer, “The Many Faces of Social Identity: Implications for Political Psychology,” *Political Psychology* 22.1 (2001): 115.

<sup>4</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity,” in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, ed. Stuart Hall et al. (London: Blackwell, 1996), 608.



important pattern of identity construction in a society within which spatial and symbolic mobility becomes a dominant way of life and walk of life. This is especially true for European society. As we may argue:

[T]he ongoing process of transnationalisation of economic, political, social and cultural patterns of everyday life in contemporary societies in Europe – with a decisive role of European citizenship based on individual freedom of movement within the EU – reinforces the need to adopt a ‘thin’ identity discourse as more relevant in understanding the scope and meaning of identity transformations. This brings us to the imperative to redefine the balance between the individual and the collective dimensions of identity.<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, adopting a symbolic interactionism perspective on studying identity formation enables us to move beyond the ontological dilemma that is exemplified in the nominalism versus holism discourse on identity. Opposition between the individual and the collective ontology of identity is transcended by the introduction of the social as a space where the individual and the collective meet, merge and transform each other. The social is the space where the individual and the collective gain concrete meaning as they emerge as a consequence of social role playing. According to Sheldon Stryker, followed by Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, the individual is always deeply embedded in a given social structure within which ‘self’ and ‘other’ or ‘we’ and ‘them’ come into being through recognition of ‘self’ and ‘other’ as actors playing different roles within society.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, “self as reflection of society”<sup>7</sup> finds its epistemic explanation in the symbolic construction of identity as a process negotiating meanings attached to concrete forms of behaviour. The interactionist credo could be summarised as follows: identity is a process. It is a form of symbolic activity.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, as we may assume after Tomasz Leszniewski:

[T]he source of identity is placed in the interactive area shared with others. It emphasises a social character of the identity structure and a total dependence

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<sup>5</sup> Grzegorz Pożarlik, “La citoyenneté européenne, nouvelle construction sociale: Implications pour la développement d’une identité collective dans l’Europe contemporaine,” in *Citoyenneté et Nationalités en Europe*, ed. Gilles Rouet (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 2011), 125-6.

<sup>6</sup> Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version* (Menlo Park: Benjamin/Cummings, 1980), cited in Jan E. Stets and Peter J. Burke, “A Sociological Approach to Self and Identity,” in *Handbook of Self and Identity*, ed. Mark R. Leary and June Price Tangney (New York: Guilford Press, 2003), 134.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Zdzisław Mach, *Symbols, Conflict and Identity: Essays in Political Anthropology* (New York: SUNNY Press, 1993).

of an individual on the social environment. [...] The basis of activity is in the framework of human relations.<sup>9</sup>

Arguing in a similar tone is Alexander Wendt, who explains the interdependence between the specific role-playing by an individual and the constitution of self-understanding which emerges in the social web of interactions:

Social identities are sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object. [...] [In this sense social identities take the form of] cognitive schemas that enable an actor to determine ‘who I am/we are’ in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations.<sup>10</sup>

One more important aspect of this very debate on the ontological and epistemological dimension of identity formation needs to be taken into account, namely the problem of multiplicity of identity formations. This problem has been conceptualised in the scholarly debate as the ‘one identity versus many identities dilemma’.<sup>11</sup>

Related to this dilemma is Piotr Sztompka’s diagnosis that in late modernity social structure is in a state of constant flux. The society cannot be analysed in terms of a fixed and replicable matrix of bonds, a set of common norms or values. Therefore late-modern or better post-modern society is in a state of permanent becoming rather than being.<sup>12</sup>

As we cannot reduce identity formation in late modernity to a single identity narrative, “identity has become multidimensional, multi-layered, differentiated. It is produced as personal construction built of a multiple repertoire of options. People ‘craft themselves’, rather than receive themselves ready-made.”<sup>13</sup>

This introduces the problem of an order or hierarchy of identities. The symbolic interactionist perspective emphasises the definitional lack of a durable hierarchy of identities as identity is a social construct that is constituted within the realm of ongoing social interactions. In this sense, identity cannot be acknowledged as social fact in the meaning that it was introduced by Émile Durkheim, who claimed that social fact could be acknowledged as a form of acting both ritualised and ephemeral, which sets boundaries within which both the individual and the society

<sup>9</sup> Tomasz Leszniewski, *Tożsamość jednostki w zmieniającym się społeczeństwie* [Identity of the Individual in a Changing Society] (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 2008), 356.

<sup>10</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Collective Identity Formation and the International State,” *American Political Science Review* 88.2 (1994): 385.

<sup>11</sup> For further discussion of this problem, see for instance: Jamieson, “Theorising Identity.”

<sup>12</sup> Piotr Sztompka, *Socjologia: Analiza społeczeństwa* [Sociology: An Analysis of the Society] (Kraków: ZNAK, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Piotr Sztompka, “From East Europeans to Europeans: Shifting Collective Identities and Symbolic Boundaries in the New Europe,” *European Review* 12.4 (2004): 493-4.

are constrained but at the same time are self-aware of their unique character, which in turn enables them to perform the roles of independent actors.<sup>14</sup>

The multiple characters of identity construction result in yet another fundamental cognitive dilemma that researchers face when trying to grasp the full complexity and dynamics of identity formation. The conceptual interdependence between identity and identification constitutes a major dilemma in identity studies. This dilemma has been present in numerous studies on European collective identity especially.<sup>15</sup> A convincing, as it may seem, answer to this dilemma was suggested by Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper. Following their argumentation, we may acknowledge identity as a particular state of reflection of the subject, which defines symbolic boundaries of a self-other or an in-group-out-group relation. Consequently, identification would denote a process of internalisation of rules of conduct that constitute a frame of reference for actual behaviour.<sup>16</sup>

### ...and Its Application

Irrespective of scholarly disagreement as to the ultimate meaning of the very concept of identity, which is also clearly observable within the symbolic interactionist environment, we may emphasise that this analytical perspective offers a valuable explanatory platform especially for the empirical investigation of crucial social processes such as consequences of migration and professional mobility on identity transformations in contemporary European society.

One example of applying the symbolic interactionism perspective to the empirical inquiry of the interplay between migration and identity transformation is a monograph by Dariusz Niedźwiedzki, who analysed implications of the so-called pendulum migration of Polish workers to Belgium after the Eastern enlargement of the EU in May 2004 on the dynamic of their identity transformation.<sup>17</sup> The author attempted to conceptualise the interplay between three closely interwoven dimensions of identity transformation among pendulum migrants. In doing so, he analysed the dynamics of transformation of meanings attached to pendulum migrants to the symbolic meaning of social habitat of the place of origin, the place of work and residence and the symbolic world constituted by pendulum migrants for

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<sup>14</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, ed. Steven Lukes (New York: Free Press, 1982), 50-9.

<sup>15</sup> See for instance: Gerard Delanty, "The Quest for European Identity," in *Making the European Polity: Reflexive Integration in the EU*, ed. Erik Oddvar Eriksen (London: Routledge, 2005), 127-42; Cathleen Kantner, "Collective Identity as Shared Ethical Self-Understanding: The Case of the Emerging European Identity," *European Journal of Social Theory* 9.4 (2006): 501-23; Klaus Eder and Wilfried Spohn, *Collective Memory and European Identity: The Effects of Integration and Enlargement* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Pożarlik, "La citoyenneté européenne," 126.

<sup>17</sup> Dariusz Niedźwiedzki, *Migracje i tożsamość: Od teorii do analizy przypadku [Migration and Identity: From Theory to Case Study]* (Kraków: Nomos, 2010).

themselves and by themselves. In conclusion of his work, Niedźwiedzki argues that

the concept of pendulum migration is an indispensable instrument for describing and understanding phenomena occurring in contemporary developed societies. These phenomena include dynamic forms of socialisation. [...] These types of socialisation signify the cohabitation of different peoples and cultures, their intermingling and encounters that occur in a multifaceted social space. [...] Migration has an effect on the self-identification of those moving as well as on how they identify others.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from a wide applicability of symbolic interactionism to the study of migration and its impact on identity transformation, one should also underline professional mobility and its influence on identity transformation as yet another area where we find symbolic interactionism a valuable explanatory perspective. Here research on identity transformation of Erasmus students seems particularly interesting and promising. One of the empirical works we should mention in this context is Vassiliki Papatsiba's analysis of the political and cultural impact of Erasmus mobility on identity formation of Erasmus students.<sup>19</sup> Having surveyed evaluation reports submitted by Erasmus students, Papatsiba finds a relatively visible impact of Erasmus mobility on the individual sense of European identity. However, this transformation does not constitute a fixed orientation. As he concludes:

[A]cquiring a feeling of belonging in an enlarged Europe, enriching national identities with the desired European dimension remained a somewhat random result of experiential learning. This type of learning depends on situations, on encounters, as well as on the individual's psychology. In the reports that were analysed, its potentialities but especially its limited effects for an important number of students were observed.<sup>20</sup>

Another example of the applicability of the symbolic interactionist perspective to identity studies is Ulrike Liebert's analysis of European identity formation in the context of German identity transformation.<sup>21</sup> In her analysis of German elite discourse based on the public intellectuals' debate on European identity, Ulrike Liebert points at the "German self-understanding in the post-national constellation" as a key process framing two co-existing major projects of European identity

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 353.

<sup>19</sup> Vassiliki Papatsiba, "Political and Individual Rationales of Student Mobility: A Case-Study of ERASMUS and a French Regional Scheme for Studies Abroad," *European Journal of Education* 40.2 (2005): 173-88.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>21</sup> Ulrike Liebert, "Two Projects of European Identity," in *Collective Identity and Democracy: The Impact of EU Enlargement*, ed. Magdalena Góra and Zdzisław Mach (Oslo: ARENA 2010), 29-60.

discourse in contemporary Germany.<sup>22</sup> The first project refers to “democratic constitutional European identity”<sup>23</sup> as conceived by Jürgen Habermas, who builds his argumentation upon the assumption that

[a] shifting of legitimation from the side of results to that of the co-determination of political programmes that affect citizens of all member states equally, though not necessarily in the same ways, will not be possible, without the development of an awareness of shared belonging to a political community that extends across national boundaries.<sup>24</sup>

The second project refers to “European cultural identity based on a community of values”<sup>25</sup>, which challenges the Habermasian ideal of European identity as a post-national identity rooted in post-national constitutional patriotism. Here Kurt Biedenkopf is cited by Liebert as the most visible proponent of a pre-existing community based upon a historical and cultural background of European we-feeling constituted by adherence to a common set of values.<sup>26</sup>

A sort of third way project of European identity is suggested by Liebert in conclusion of her discussion of German discourse on European identity. Liebert’s idea is very much constructed in line with symbolic interactionist premises. “Doing Europe” seems more accurate than only “debating European identity,” so the argument goes.<sup>27</sup> More precisely:

The negotiation of what – under conditions of complexity – holds Europeans together, that is which democratic and constitutional principles and which common values form their common core – involves multiple sites and agents, among which not only European presidencies and national governments but also parliaments, civil society and public spheres are indispensable.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

By way of conclusion of this brief analysis of the symbolic interactionism perspective and its applicability in contemporary identity studies, it should be emphasised that it offers a relatively wide window of opportunity to go beyond well-established, thus limited, theoretical and methodological paradigms of researching

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>24</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Divided West* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 70, cited in Liebert, “Two Projects of European Identity.”

<sup>25</sup> Liebert, “Two Projects of European Identity,” 47.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

identity. More specifically, it allows us to overcome reductionism of orthodox nominalism and holism by placing identity in the social as an interactive space where the self is reflected in the society and the society is reflected in the self. This seems to be a valuable explanatory perspective on studying identity transformation in contemporary European society.

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## **Part Two**

### **Postcolonial Europe**



# Zeichen als Wunder?

## Eine der Geschichte entnommene Anekdote

Bill Bell

Seitdem Homi K. Bhabhas „Zeichen als Wunder: Fragen der Ambivalenz und Autorität unter einem Baum bei Delhi im Mai 1817“ erstmals als Artikel im *Critical Inquiry* im Jahr 1985 erschienen ist, hat sich dieser Text zu einem *locus classicus* postkolonialer Studien entwickelt.<sup>1</sup> Als wichtiges Dokument aus dem Fundus des Postkolonialismus unserer Zeit wurde der Essay unter anderem 1994 als Kapitel in *Die Verortung der Kultur* sowie in zahllosen Anthologien und Sekundärwerken abgedruckt. Darüber hinaus wurde der Text in mehrere Sprachen übersetzt. Homi K. Bhabha begründet einen Diskurs, dessen Hauptwortschöpfungen – „Hybridität“, „schlaue Höflichkeit“, „Mimikry“ – sich im Verlauf der vergangenen 25 Jahre dermaßen weit verbreiteten, dass sie die postkoloniale Imagination geradezu kolonisiert haben und das mit einer einfallsreichen Energie, wie sie in der schöngestigen Welt der Kulturtheorie selten zu finden ist.

Ich habe an dieser Stelle nicht die Absicht, die eindrucksvolle und dynamische Darbietung europäischer Kulturkritik zu rezitieren, die Bhabhas Essay prägt, derweil er sich – geschickt und pflichtgetreu – durch die Ökumene der Koryphäen Freud, Foucault, Lacan und Derrida hindurch bewegt, noch will ich die subtile Weise thematisieren, in der der Essay auf Konzepte zusteuert, die inzwischen als gängig gelten dürfen. Stattdessen möchte ich aufzeigen, wie der Essay, insbesondere im Hinblick auf seine anekdotische Geschichtsschreibung, mehr Probleme aufwirft, als Bhabha in diesem Rahmen absehen oder gar auflösen kann.

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Ich bin all jenen Kollegen dankbar, mit denen ich dieses Essay vor seinem Erscheinen diskutiert habe, im Besonderen Georgia Axiotou, Peter Cudmore, John Frow, Gladson Jathanna, Michelle Keown, Anca-Raluca Radu, Kirsten Sandrock, Barbara Schaff und Peter van der Veer. Ganz besonderen Dank schulde ich Rosinka Chaudhuri und Abhijit Gupta dafür, dass sie ihre aus eigener Untersuchung des Gegenstands gewonnenen Erkenntnisse mit mir geteilt haben.

<sup>1</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, „Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817,” *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (1985): 144-65. Die Originalfassung des vorliegenden Artikels zitiert Bhabhas Essay durchgehend in der Version, in der es in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2010), 145-74, erschien. Eine deutschsprachige Fassung des Essay ist: „Zeichen als Wunder: Fragen der Ambivalenz und Autorität unter einem Baum bei Delhi im Mai 1817“ in *Die Verortung der Kultur* (Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 2000), 151-80. Die Zitate aus *The Location of Culture* entstammen der deutschen Übersetzung, die Zitate aus Sekundärwerken und aus historischen Quellen erscheinen hier in neu übersetzter Fassung. Anm. d. Ü.

Seit dem Erscheinen von Bhabhas Essay ist die Beziehung zwischen Kritik und Geschichte – und im Besonderen der Einsatz historischer Anekdoten zum Zwecke der Polemik – in verstörender und ungelöster Weise in der kritischen Praxis präsent geblieben. Carolyn Porter beobachtet in der Verwendung der isolierten Anekdote, wie sie bei Bhabha üblich ist, eine Tendenz „hin zum ‚kolonialen Formalismus‘, der sich die ‚seltsamen Dinge‘, die man jenseits des Literarischen finden kann, aneignet, derweil der gesellschaftliche und historische Hintergrund, der sie hervorgebracht hat, ausgeblendet wird.“ Solch eine Herangehensweise, argumentiert Porter, bedeute ganz unmittelbar ein „Plündern und Auslöschen“ jener „diskursiven Praktiken, auf die sich das Argument beruft.“<sup>2</sup> Mit dem Ansprechen derselben Tendenzen, wie sie sich in Bhabhas einflussreichem Essay manifestieren, will ich nicht eine Rückkehr zum *grand récit* der Geschichte heraufbeschwören. Vielmehr möchte ich drei Gegengeschichten unterbreiten, die eine Reihe von Fragen aufwerfen, die in jenem paradigmatischen Diskurs, der sich nahtlos und selbstsicher zwischen theoretischer Stellungnahme und *historischer* Behauptung hin und her bewegt, unter den Tisch gefallen sind.

## 1 Und worin liegt die Bedeutung der Bibel?

Bhabha wählt als Ausgangspunkt seiner Argumentation die folgende Episode, wie sie 1818 im *Missionary Register* erschien und die Unterhaltung zwischen einem eingeborenen Katecheten und 500 seltsamen Konvertiten in einem heiligen Wäldchen in der Nähe von Delhi beschreibt. Es handelt sich um eine Anekdote, auf die Bhabha in seiner Argumentation an strategischen Momenten zurückkommt und auf deren Grundlage die pauschaleren historischen und theoretischen Behauptungen des Essays aufbauen. „In der ersten Maiwoche des Jahres 1817“, schreibt Bhabha, „reiste Anund Messeh, einer der ersten einheimischen Missionare Indiens, hastig und aufgeregt von seiner Missionsstation in Meerut zu einem ganz in der Nähe von Delhi gelegenen Wäldchen.“:

Dort fand er etwa 500 Menschen im Schatten der Bäume sitzend vor, Männer, Frauen und Kinder, die, genau wie man es ihm geschildert hatte, in Lektüre und Gespräch vertieft waren. Er wendete sich einem der älter aussehenden Männer zu und sprach ihn an, worauf es zu folgendem Gespräch kam.

„Wer um Himmels willen sind all diese Menschen, und wo kommen sie her?“ „Wir sind arm und niedrig, und wir lesen und lieben dieses Buch.“ – „Was ist das für ein Buch?“ „Das Buch Gottes“ – „Lasst mich doch einmal einen Blick darauf werfen.“ Als Anund das Buch öffnete, wurde er gewahr, daß es das Evangelium unseres Herrn war, das in die hindustani-

<sup>2</sup> Carolyn Porter, „Are We Being Historical Yet?“, *South Atlantic Quarterly* 87.4 (1988): 743-86 (799).

sche Sprache übersetzt worden war und von dem die Menge eine reichliche Anzahl von Exemplaren zu besitzen schien: einige waren GEDRUCKT, andere hatten die Leute selbst aus den gedruckten Ausgaben ABGESCHRIEBEN. Anund wies auf den Namen Jesu und fragte: „Wer ist das?“ „das ist Gott! Er gab uns diese Buch.“ – „Wo habt ihr es bekommen?“ „Ein Engel vom Himmel gab es uns, auf dem Markt von Hurdwar.“ – Ein Engel?“ „Ja, für uns war er der der Engel Gottes: aber er war ein Mensch, ein gelehrter Weiser.“ (Bei diesen übersetzten Bibeln kann es sich nur um die Bücher gehandelt haben, die vor fünf, sechs Jahren von der Missionsstation in Hurdwar verteilt worden sind.) „Die handgeschriebenen Bücher schreiben wir selbst, da das unsere einzige Möglichkeit ist, mehr von diesem gesegneten Wort zu bekommen.“ – „Diese Bücher“, sagte Anund, „lehren die Religion der europäischen Sahibs. Es ist IHR Buch; und sie haben es in unserer Sprache gedruckt, damit auch wir daran teilhaben.“ „Ah! Nein“, erwiderte der Fremde, „das ist unmöglich, denn sie essen Fleisch.“ – „Jesus Christus“, sagte Anund, „lehrt, daß es ohne Bedeutung ist, was man isst oder trinkt. ESSEN ist nichts vor Gott. *Nicht das, was in den Mund eines Menschen hineingelangt, besudelt ihn, sondern das, was aus dem Mund herauskommt, das besudelt den Menschen:* denn die Niedertracht kommt aus dem Herzen. Aus dem Herzen kommen böse Gedanken, Morde, Ehebrüche, Hurerei, Diebstähle; und diese sind es, die die Menschen besudeln.“

„Das ist wahr; aber wie kann es das Buch der Europäer sein, wenn wir doch glauben, daß es Gottes Geschenk an uns ist? Er schickte es uns, in Hurdwar.“ „Gott gab es vor langer Zeit den Sahibs, und SIE sandten es uns.“ ... Die Unwissenheit und Einfalt vieler Leute ist sehr verblüffend, denn sie haben noch nie zuvor von einem gedruckten Buch gehört, und sein bloßes Erscheinen war für sie wie ein Wunder. Das auf diese Weise erworbene, immer weiter wachsende Wissen löste größte Erregung aus, und alle waren sich der Anerkennung der Überlegenheit der Doktrinen diese Heiligen Buchs gegenüber allem, was sie bisher gesehen oder gehört hatten, einig. Bald zeigte sich Gleichgültigkeit gegenüber den Kastenunterschieden, und die Einmischung und die tyrannische Autorität der Brahmanen wurden als immer drückender und unerträglicher empfunden. Schließlich beschlossen sie, sich von ihren übrigen Hindubrüdern zu trennen und selbst aus ihrer Mitte eine Gruppe der vier oder fünf Leute auszuwählen, die am besten lesen konnten, damit sie die Öffentlichkeit aus diesem neu erworbenen Buch unterrichteten. ... Anund fragte sie: „Warum seid ihr alle weiß gekleidet?“ „Die Gott ergebenen Menschen sollen weiße Gewänder tragen“, war die Antwort, „als Zeichen dafür, daß sie rein und ihrer Sünden ledig sind.“ – Anund bemerkte: „Ihr solltet GETAUFT werden, im Namen des Vaters, des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes. Kommt nach Meerut: Dort gibt es einen christlichen Pater, und er wird euch zeigen, was ihr tun soll.“ Sie antworteten: „Jetzt müssen wir zur Ernte nach Hause; aber da wir die Absicht haben, uns einmal im Jahr zu treffen, werden wir vielleicht nächstes Jahr nach Meerut kommen.“ ... Ich erklärte ihnen das Wesen des Sakramentes und der Taufe, worauf sie antworteten: „Wir sind bereit, uns allen anderen Bräuchen der Christen zu fügen, aber nicht dem Sakrament, denn die Euro-

päer essen das Fleisch der Kuh, und das ist für uns unmöglich.“ Darauf antwortete ich: „Diese WORT stammt von Gott und nicht von den Menschen und wenn ER eure Herzen verstehen läßt, dann werdet ihr es RICHTIG begreifen.“ Sie antworteten: „Sobald unser ganzes Land dieses Sakrament empfängt, werden wir es auch tun.“ Darauf bemerkte ich: „Die Zeit ist nah, wo alle Länder die WORT empfangen werden!“ Sie antworteten: „Das ist wahr!“<sup>3</sup>

Der zentrale Tropus, um den herum Bhabha seine Lesart dieses seltsamen Augenblicks ausformuliert, ist einer, der sich, so argumentiert er, im 19. Jahrhundert „so beständig wiederholt“, dass er „triumphal eine Literatur des Empire *begründet*“, nämlich „die plötzliche, zufällige Entdeckung des englischen Buchs.“ Sobald die Bibel in Erscheinung tritt, steht sie für Bhabha im Einklang mit einer von ihm als „koloniales Begehren und Disziplin“<sup>4</sup> bezeichneten Abstraktion, welche geradezu auf eine Begegnung mit Indern wartet, in der sie verändert, anverwandelt, hybridisiert wird.

Die „Bibeln“, die in Hurdwar verteilt wurden, enthielten sehr wahrscheinlich Ausgaben des Neuen Testaments in Hindi, angefertigt in der baptistischen Missionsdruckerei in Serampore.<sup>5</sup> William Carey, jener Missionar und Drucker, welcher ihre Herstellung beaufsichtigt hatte, war zu einem Zeitpunkt in Indien eingetroffen, um dort seine Druckerei aufzubauen, als die britische Kolonialpolitik der Prä-

<sup>3</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*, 151. Bhabha transkribiert den Bericht aus *The Missionary Register*, Januar 1818: 18-9.

<sup>4</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*, 152.

<sup>5</sup> Chamberlain hätte in Hurdwar keine Ausgaben der Heiligen Schrift in Braj-Bhakha verteilen können, wie Bhabha spekuliert (166). Erst als er dort angekommen war, im April 1814, erhielt er ein Paket aus Serampore, in dem er die ersten Druckfahnen seiner Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments in Braj-Bhakha vorfand. Siehe: William Yates, *Memoirs of Mr. John Chamberlain* (London: Wightman and Cramp, 1826), 347. In einer aus Kalkutta stammenden Depesche vom 21. August 1817 wird behauptet, dass man bei den Pilgern von Delhi „lediglich 2 oder 3 gedruckte Ausgaben“ vom „Neuen Testament in Hindustani“ vorgefunden habe. Auf einem dieser Bücher „wurde der Name von Mr. Chamberlain gefunden. Demgemäß kam man dahinter, dass Mr. C. der Engel gewesen war. Er hatte ein paar Ausgaben beim Jahrmarkt von Hurdwar verteilt.“ Siehe: *American Baptist Magazine*, März 1818: 298. Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass es sich dabei um Ausgaben von *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour J.C.; translated into the Hindustanee* (Hindi) *Language by the Missionaries at Serampore* handelte, erstmals 1811 von der Serampore Mission Press veröffentlicht; von Henry Martyn unter der Beihilfe von Mirza Fitrat und „anderen gelehrten Eingeborenen“ revidiert und 1814 von der Serampore Press neugedruckt. Siehe: J. T. Zenker, *Bibliotheca orientalis* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1861), 429-30.

John Chamberlain scheint auch eine Vielzahl anderer Druckwerke aus Serampore beim Jahrmarkt in Hurdwar verteilt zu haben. Im Jahr 1818 entdeckte man, dass sich im Besitz der hier fraglichen Pilger 11 Ausgaben des Evangeliums nach Matthäus und eine Ausgabe des Evangeliums nach Markus befanden (*Missionary Register*, Mai 1818: 205), obwohl diese womöglich auf anderem Wege erworben worden waren. Ein weiterer Missionar berichtet, dass zwei Brahmanen kostenlos Evangelium des Evangeliums nach Lukas in Hindi und von *The Gospel Messenger* erhalten hatten, letzteres ein Traktat mit bengalischen Versen von Ram Ram Basu, zusammengestellt von Chamberlain und ebenfalls in Serampore gedruckt. Siehe: Thomas Smith, *The History and Origin of the Missionary Societies* (London: Kelly and Evans, 1824), 523; John Murdoch, *English Translations of Selected Tracts Published in India* (Madras: Scottish Press, 1861), ix-x.

senz von Missionaren auf dem Subkontinent ganz offen feindselig gegenüberstand. Sie drohte sogar damit, jeden Missionar zu verhaften, „der das Territorium der [Ostindien-]Gesellschaft unerlaubterweise betritt.“ Da er ihn als eine Gefahr für die öffentliche Sicherheit ansah, hatte der Generalgouverneur Carey im Jahr 1799 untersagt, seinen Druckereibetrieb in Kalkutta einzurichten. Angesichts des Ausbleibens einer Genehmigung der Briten fand Carey Zuflucht in Serampore, das damals unter dänischer Kontrolle stand und wo er „frei von der Behelligung durch die britischen Behörden“ war.<sup>6</sup> Dort vollzog sich, trotz der Einmischung von Regierungsstellen, die Übersetzung und der Druck jener Bücher.

Aber aus Sicht der britischen Behörden war kaum jemand so lästig wie John Chamberlain, jener Missionar, welcher tatsächlich die Bücher auf dem Jahrmarkt in Hardwar verteilt hatte. Als er im April 1814 in dem am Ufer des Ganges gelegenen Hardwar – einem bedeutenden Wallfahrtsort für Hindus, Muslime und Sikhs – eintraf, hatte er sich nicht vorstellen können, welcher Erfolg auf ihn warten würde. Innerhalb von zehn Tagen, so beschreibt es ein Augenzeuge, war seine Gemeinde auf „viele tausende“ angewachsen. „Sie saßen herum und horchten mit einer Aufmerksamkeit, die einer christlichen Zuhörerschaft zur Ehre gereicht hätte. Als sich der Missionar allabendlich zurückzog, begleiteten ihn die Ovationen der Massen: ‚Möge der Padree (beziehungsweise Geistliche) ewig leben.‘“<sup>7</sup> Der Erfolg von Chamberlains geistlicher Tätigkeit führte zu seiner Ausweisung aus dem Bezirk – auf Anweisung des Generalgouverneurs und vollzogen durch bewaffnete Sicherheitskräfte. Die britischen Behörden, die seine Anwesenheit als politisch gefährlich ansahen, reagierten schnell und der „Engel“, der die Ausgaben des Neuen Testaments auf dem Jahrmarkt in Hardwar verteilt hatte, sah sich gezwungen, nach Serampore zurückzukehren.<sup>8</sup>

Derartige Vorkommnisse sollten uns nachdenklich stimmen, wenn wir die Frage beantworten wollen, ob dieselben Bücher Teil einer konzertierten und koordinierten Kampagne von Missionaren und Vertretern der Behörden gewesen sind oder nicht. Saurabh Dube konstatierte in diesem Zusammenhang „eine bössartige Binsenweisheit unter Historikern und Theoretikern des kolonialen Diskurses, nach der die Konstruktion wirkungsmächtiger Bilder des nichtwestlichen Anderen durch eine geeinte und siegreiche koloniale Elite mit einer gleichförmigen westlichen

<sup>6</sup> John Clark Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward, Embracing the History of the Serampore Mission* (London: Longman, 1859), Bd. 1, 120-2.

<sup>7</sup> Yates, *Memoirs of Mr. John Chamberlain*, 350.

<sup>8</sup> Zum Zeitpunkt seiner geistlichen Tätigkeit in Hardwar agierte der Missionar unter der Patronage und dem Schutz von Begum Samru, der kaschmirischen Herrscherin des Fürstentums von Sirdhana. Nach Chamberlains Entlassung befahl sie ihren eigenen Soldaten, ihm bewaffneten Schutz zu gewähren, und richtete mehrfach erfolglose Appelle an die Kolonialregierung, Chamberlain den Verbleib in Sirdhana zu erlauben. Siehe: William Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography* (Kalkutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1850-2), Bd. 2, 228. Siehe ebenfalls: *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, März 1818: 298; Lucius Edwin Smith, *Heroes and Martyrs of the Modern Missionary Enterprise* (Providence, RI: Potter, 1856), 98.

Mentalität erfolgte.“<sup>9</sup> So offeriert Bhabha die folgende, kurze geschichtliche Zusammenfassung:

Es waren Grants Wahl in den Aufsichtsrat der Ostindischen Kompanie 1774 und ins Parlament 1802 und sein energisches Eintreten für die missionarischen Ideen der Clapham-Sekte, die zur Wiederaufnahme einer „Frömmigkeitsklausel“ in die Satzung der Ostindischen Kompanie im Jahre 1813 führten. 1817 betrieb die Kirchliche Missionsgesellschaft bereits einundsechzig Schulen, und 1818 arbeitete sie den „Burdwan-Plan“ aus, einen zentralen Lehrplan für den Unterricht in der englischen Sprache. Das Ziel dieses Planes nimmt fast wörtlich Thomas Macaulays berühmte „Minute on Education“ vorweg: „einen Stamm gut ausgebildeter Arbeiter zu schaffen, die das Englische so weit beherrschen, daß sie als Lehrer, Übersetzer und Verfasser nützlicher Werke für die Masse der Bevölkerung wirken können“. Anund Messehs monotones Wiederholen von Kapiteln und Versen und seine kunstlose Übersetzungstechnik sind Bestandteile einer der kunstvollsten Technologien der kolonialen Macht.<sup>10</sup>

Die Vorstellung, wonach die missionarischen Bestrebungen in Indien vor und nach 1813 ein kulturelles Unternehmen gewesen sind, das in Komplizenschaft mit der offiziellen Regierungspolitik stand, wäre mit den Erfahrungen von Carey und Chamberlain nicht in Einklang zu bringen gewesen. Und sie standen in dieser Hinsicht nicht alleine. Eine Reihe von Forschern beschreibt die „tiefgreifenden Meinungsunterschiede“ über die Rolle missionarischer Tätigkeiten lange Jahre nach Inkrafttreten der „Frömmigkeitsklausel“ und verweist darauf, dass zahlreiche Chargen in der Kolonialverwaltung am liebsten „den Missionaren den Zutritt verweigert und Sitten und Bräuche Indiens unbehelligt gelassen“ hätten.<sup>11</sup> Gauri Viswanathan merkt in diesem Zusammenhang an, dass, obwohl die Satzung von 1813 als „ein Sieg der Missionare erscheinen“ mag, „diese bestürzt auf die anhaltende Überwachung ihrer Aktivitäten reagierten, die in unerträglicher Weise an Strenge

<sup>9</sup> Saurabh Dube, „Travelling Light: Missionary Musings, Colonial Cultures and Anthropological Anxieties,” in *Travel Worlds: Journeys in Contemporary Cultural Politics*, hrsg. Raminder Kaur und John Hutnyk (London: Zed, 1999), 36. Auch Bart Moore-Gilbert stellt fest, dass „Bhabhas einheitliche Konzeption des ‚kolonialen Untertanen‘ [...] der historischen Wirklichkeit nicht gerecht wird.“ Siehe: Bart Moore-Gilbert, *Writing India, 1757-1900: The Literature of British India* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 202. Für meine eigene, revisionistische Interpretation der monologischen Sichtweise des Empire siehe: Bill Bell, „Commentary: Selkirk’s Silence,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 18. März 2011: 14-5.

<sup>10</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*, 156.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Ballard, *The Age of Progress, 1848-1866* (London: Methuen, 1971), 47. Siehe auch: Penelope Carson, „An Imperial Dilemma: The Propagation of Christianity in Early Colonial India,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 18.2 (1990): 169-90; John L. Comaroff, „Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa,” in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, hrsg. Frederick Cooper und Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 163-97; Karen Chancey, „The Star in the East: The Controversy over Christian Missions to India, 1805-1813,” *The Historian* 60.3 (1998): 507-22.



zunahm.<sup>12</sup> Im Jahr 1822 erklärte Thomas Munro, der Gouverneur von Madras, in unmissverständlicher Weise: „In jedem Land, jedoch besonders in diesem, wo die Herrschenden so wenig an der Zahl und von anderer Rasse als die Bevölkerung sind, ist es das Gefährlichste überhaupt, sich in die religiösen Befindlichkeiten einzumischen.“<sup>13</sup>

Macaulays berüchtigtes „Memorandum zur Bildung“ und dessen Aufruf zur Förderung der englischen Sprache in Indien – ein Gegenstand, auf den viele postkoloniale Interpretationen der indischen Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert zurückgreifen – mögen in Schulen und Universitäten, die der Kolonialverwaltung unterstanden, umgesetzt worden sein. Aber in den Missionsschulen der Außenbezirke wurden mit Nachdruck weiterhin einheimische Sprachen und Religionen gelehrt. Wie auch immer die erklärten Ziele des Burdwan-Planes lauteten, nicht alle standen rückhaltlos zu der Verpflichtung, die englische Sprache zu verbreiten: So gab es im Jahr 1828 zehn Schulen in und um Burdwan, „in denen rund 1000 Kinder die bengalische Sprache gelehrt wurden.“<sup>14</sup> Die Rolle, die Englisch in Indien einnahm, beschäftigte Carey bei der Vorbereitung seiner Übersetzungen sehr. Wie er später selbst schrieb: „Es war spürbar, dass die staatliche englische Bildungspolitik – zweifellos unbeabsichtigt, aber mit diesem Ergebnis – zur Abkühlung der aufblühenden Andacht und Hingabe sowie der religiösen Empfindungen der Schüler führte.“<sup>15</sup> Davon überzeugt, dass Sanskrit (das er als „Vater aller östlichen Sprachen“ bezeichnete) eine größere Affinität zum Griechischen der Bibel als zum Englischen besaß, versammelte Carey in Serampore eine Gruppe einheimischer Wissenschaftler, um antike religiöse Texte aufzubereiten, die einer Vielzahl von Traditionen und einer Bandbreite von Dialekten entstammten. In einem Schreiben an Careys Cousin hinterließ William Ward 1811 die folgende, lebhaft Beschreibung der Betriebsamkeit in der Druckerei:

<sup>12</sup> Gauri Viswanathan, „The Beginnings of English Literary Studies in British India,” *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, hrsg. Bill Ashcroft et al., 2. Aufl. (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), 376.

<sup>13</sup> George Robert Gleig, *The Life of Major-General Sir Thomas Munro* (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830), Bd. 2, 118. Zu den gefährlichen Folgen, für die Munro und andere der Einmischung durch Missionen die Schuld zuschoben, gehört der Sepoy-Aufstand von 1806. Jahrzehnte später sollten viele ähnliche Vorwürfe gegenüber christlichen Missionaren im Zusammenhang mit den ethnischen Spannungen erheben, die den Aufstand von 1857 entfacht hatten. In den folgenden Jahren blieben die Konflikte zwischen britischen Christen und der offiziellen Politik der Regierung bitter. Ein aufgebrachter Kommentator merkte 1862 in der *Calcutta Review* an: „Warum werden die heiligen Bücher der Hindus und der Koran [...] in den Universitäten der Regierung gelesen, derweil die Bibel [...] ausgeschlossen bleibt? Warum duldet man, dass der Direktor für Volksbildung aus englischen Schulbüchern alle Andeutungen auf das Christentum, wie vage sie auch sein mögen, entfernen lässt, während die bengalischen Textbücher, die von der Regierung für diejenigen ausgewählt wurden, die ihre Prüfungen in der Landessprache bestehen möchten, weiterhin in unaussprechlicher Weise Obszönitäten und Schmutz enthalten?“ (217).

<sup>14</sup> Charles Williams, *The Missionary Gazetteer* (London: Westley and Davies, 1828), 19.

<sup>15</sup> George Smith, *The Life of William Carey* (London: John Murray, 1885), 456.

Wenn man eintritt, sieht man Ihren Cousin, in einem engen Raum sitzend und bekleidet mit einer weißen Jacke, beim Lesen oder Schreiben oder wie sein Blick durch das ganze Büro schweift, das mehr als 170 Fuß lang ist. Dort kann man Inder beobachten, die mit der Übersetzung der Heiligen Schrift in die verschiedenen Sprachen oder mit der Korrektur von Druckfahnen beschäftigt sind. Man nimmt Notiz von in Kästen ausgelegten Schrifttypen in Arabisch, Persisch, Nagari, Panjabi, Marathi, Chinesisch, Oriya, Burmesisch, Kanaresisch, Griechisch, Hebräisch und Englisch. Hindus, Muselmanen und indische Christen – alle sind sie beschäftigt mit Abfassen, Korrigieren, Verteilen. Als nächstes kommen vier Männer, die die Bögen mit der Heiligen Schrift in den verschiedenen Sprachen drucken; andere falten diese Bögen und liefern sie in dem großen Lagerraum ab; und das Binden erfolgt durch sechs Muselmanen.<sup>16</sup>

Genauso wie man christliche Schriften in einer Vielzahl von Sprachen reproduzierte, druckte der Betrieb in Serampore auch eine beachtliche Anzahl von indischen religiösen Texten. Shivanath hat auf die Bedeutung von Careys Unternehmen für das frühe Aufblühen der indigenen Literatur verwiesen.<sup>17</sup> Swapan Majumdar bemerkt in diesem Zusammenhang, wie Carey, dadurch dass er „Panditen für Sanskrit und Munhis für das Persisch-Arabische zusammenbrachte, um die bengalische Prosa nachhaltig zu verändern“, ein Zentrum zur Förderung der indischen Literatur schuf: „Von Religionsgesprächen und populären Geschichten, Chroniken und Legenden bis hin zu maßgeblichen Ausgaben literarischer Texte.“<sup>18</sup>

Für Carey war sein Druckereiunternehmen Teil eines größeren Engagements zur Förderung der einheimischen Sprachen angesichts dessen, was er als feindlichen englischen Einfall ansah. In dem Manifest, das er für die Mission in Serampore abfasste, argumentierte er, wie wichtig es sei, dass die religiösen Gemeinden von Indern geleitet würden, die in der Lage wären, das „religiöse Anliegen viel eher als zur eigenen Nation gehörig zu kennzeichnen“. Wie die reformorientierten Hindus, mit denen er Bündnisse schmiedete, kämpfte Carey gegen kastenbedingte Ungleichheit, gegen das Töten von Kindern und gegen Witwenverbrennungen (*Sati*) – bei deren Verbot im Jahr 1829 er eine bedeutende Rolle spielte –, aber betreffs der „unschuldigen Sitten der Menschheit“ vertrat er (genau wie jene reformorientierten Hindus) die Sichtweise einer strikten Nichteinmischung:

Wir haben es als unsere Pflicht angesehen, die Namen von eingeborenen Konvertiten nicht zu ändern, hierbei aus der Heiligen Schrift ablesend, dass auch die Apostel die Namen der ersten Christen nicht abänderten, die sich

<sup>16</sup> S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey*, 6. Aufl. (London, 1925), 283.

<sup>17</sup> Shivanath, „Modern Dogri Literature,“ in *Modern Indian Literature: An Anthology*, hrsg. K. M. George (Neu-Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1992), Bd. 1, 96.

<sup>18</sup> Swapan Majumdar, „Literature and Literary Life in Old Calcutta,“ in *Calcutta, the Living City*, hrsg. Sukanta Chaudhuri (Kalkutta: Oxford University Press, 1990), Bd. 1, 107-9.

vom Heidentum abgewandt hatten. [...] Wir denken, dass das überragende Ziel [...] nicht darin besteht, die Namen, die Bekleidung, das Essen und die unschuldigen Sitten der Menschheit zu verändern. [...] Genauso wie es nicht angemessen wäre, die Namen heidnischer Götter unter Christen zu bewahren, ist es weder notwendig noch vernünftig, jedem einzelnen Mann nach seiner Konversion einen neuen Namen zu geben, da hierdurch die Abläufe in Familien, zwischen Nachbarn usw. unnötig gestört würden.<sup>19</sup>

Die Ausgaben der christlichen Bibel – übersetzt aus dem *Koine* des Griechischen in die verschiedenen indischen Mundarten –, die 1814 von Chamberlain auf dem Jahrmarkt in Hardwar verteilt wurden, waren nicht ganz jenes Sinnbild eines konzertierten Vorhabens der Engländer, welches sich Bhabha vorstellt. Übersetzt von einheimischen Gelehrten, gedruckt von einem kolonialen Exilanten, verteilt von einem politischen Auführer, war dem „englischen Buch“ das Phänomen der komplexen kulturellen Begegnung keineswegs fremd – und eigentlich war es auch überhaupt nicht englisch. Die Bibeln aus Serampore waren hybrid, als sie in Hardwar eintrafen.

## 2 Sag mir, wer sind all diese Leute?

„Man stelle sich die Szenerie vor“, schreibt Bhabha:

die Bibel – übersetzt vielleicht in einen nordindischen Dialekt wie das Brighasha, kostenlos oder für den Preis einer Rupie verteilt inmitten einer Kultur, in der im allgemeinen nur Hindus mit Kastenzugehörigkeit ein Exemplar der Geheiligten Schriften besitzen – wie sie von den Einheimischen ehrfürchtig sowohl als Neuheit als auch als Hausgottheit in Empfang genommen wird. [...] Worin besteht bei der Offerierung der Hindi-Bibel der Wert des Englischen? Er besteht [...] damit die Einheimischen sich dem brahmanischen „Wissensmonopol“ widersetzen und sich aus ihrer Bindung an die eigenen religiösen und kulturellen Traditionen lösen[.]<sup>20</sup>

Ein grundlegendes Problem dieser Analyse besteht darin, dass die Eingeborenen, denen wir in dieser Anekdote begegnen, nicht wirklich praktizierende Hindus waren. Anand Messehs Frage, als er den 500 mysteriösen Fremden zum ersten Mal begegnet – „Sag mir, wer sind all diese Leute? und woher kommen sie?“ – bleibt in der Erzählung des Katecheten unbeantwortet. Aber zwei Monate später wurde das Geheimnis gelüftet. Am 14. Juli 1817 berichtete der Missionar Henry Fisher, „diese armen Fremden, die uns so beschäftigt haben, werden als Saadhs bezeichnet.“ Bei weiteren Nachforschungen entdeckte Fisher in mindestens fünf Dörfern in der

<sup>19</sup> Smith, *Life of William Carey*, 448.

<sup>20</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*, 173-5.

Umgebung von Delhi Mitglieder dieser Sekte, die einer monotheistischen Konfession verpflichtet waren und sich vor langer Zeit vom Hinduismus abgespalten hatte. Als Folge davon waren sie, so die Beobachtung von Fisher, Ausgestoßene, die fortwährenden „unerbittlichen“ Verfolgungen ausgesetzt waren, einschließlich regelmäßiger Züchtigungen und Erpressungen durch die Brahmanen.<sup>21</sup>

Die Sekte hatte sich im Jahr 1543 von der Hauptströmung des Hinduismus abgespalten, als sie von einem religiösen Propheten namens Birbhan gegründet worden war, einem Mann, den die Saadhs als das personifizierte Wort Gottes ansahen. Um das Jahr 1658 herum nahmen sie die Lehren des Jogi Das an, der einige der Kernvorstellungen des Christentums in die Sekte einführte, die ihm möglicherweise durch jene frühen katholischen Missionare vermittelt worden waren, die damals in Indien wirkten.<sup>22</sup> Von da an hatten die Saadhs ihren Glauben an den Einen Gott (*Satnam*), an Monogamie und an die Ablehnung aller Kastenunterschiede bewahrt. Ihre religiösen Hauptschriften, *Pothis* (das Buch), wurden auf öffentlichen Versammlungen während einer alljährlichen Wallfahrt verlesen, deren Hauptzweck darin bestand, ein Forum zur Beilegung interner Zwistigkeiten und zur Klarstellung der Politik und Doktrin der Gemeinschaft zu schaffen. So erklärt sich auch, warum sie sich 1817 in dem Wäldchen in der Nähe von Delhi, einem traditionellen Wallfahrtsort der Saadhs, aufhielten. Die Kernelemente des Gebarens und des Glaubens der Saadhs waren in Form von zwölf Geboten (*Hukms*) niedergelegt, die in den von Jogi Das vermittelten Schriften festgehalten waren, den *Adi Updesh* (oder „Ersten Maximen“), in denen wir offensichtliche jüdisch-christliche Elemente entdecken können:

1. Erkenne nur einen Gott an, der dich geschaffen hat und dich vernichten kann, über dem niemand steht und dem allein Verehrung gebührt; nicht der Erde, noch Stein, noch Metall, noch Holz, noch Bäumen, noch irgendeinem geschaffenem Ding. Es gibt nur einen Herrn und nur das Wort des Herrn. Derjenige, der über Falschheit nachsinnt, übt bereits Falschheit aus und begeht eine Sünde, und wer eine Sünde begeht, stürzt in die Hölle.
2. Sei bescheiden und demütig, richte deine Liebe nicht auf Weltliches, folge treu deinen Glaubenssätzen, und vermeide Verkehr mit allen, die anderen Glaubens sind, esse nicht das Brot eines Fremden.
3. Lüge niemals, noch spreche zu irgendeiner Zeit Übles zu oder von irgendetwas, das der Erde oder des Wassers ist, oder Bäumen oder Tieren. Lass die Zunge damit beschäftigt sein, Gott zu preisen. Stehle niemals, noch Reichtum, noch Ländereien, noch Tiere, noch Weideland. Unterscheide zwischen deinem eigenen Eigentum und dem eines anderen, und sei zufrieden mit dem, was du besitzt. Male dir niemals Böses aus. Lasse deinen

<sup>21</sup> *Missionary Register*, Mai 1818: 204-5.

<sup>22</sup> F. E. Keay, *Kabir and his Followers* (Neu-Delhi: Aravali, 1997), 164.

- Blick nicht auf unziemlichen Dingen ruhen, noch auf Männern, noch auf Frauen, noch auf Tänzern, noch auf Darbietungen.
4. Lausche keiner üblen Unterhaltung, noch irgendetwas anderem denn Lob für den Herrn, noch Erzählungen, noch Klatsch, noch Rufmord, noch Musik, noch Gesang außer religiösen Liedern; aber dann darf die einzige musikalische Begleitung im Geiste sein.
  5. Begehre niemals irgendetwas, weder Gegenstände noch Reichtum; nimm einem anderen nichts weg. Alle Dinge werden von Gott geschenkt, sofern du Vertrauen in ihn hast, wird dir gegeben werden.
  6. Wenn man dich fragt, was du bist, sage du bist ein Sadh, spreche nicht von Kasten, ergehe dich nicht in Streitigkeiten, halte fest in deinem Glauben, leg deine Hoffnungen nicht in Menschen.
  7. Trage weiße Kleidung, benutze keine Farbstoffe, noch Kollyrium, noch Zahnpasta, noch *mehndi* (Henna), noch lege Markierungen auf deine Person oder deinen Kopf, die dich in Gruppen einteilen, noch trage Perlen-schnüre oder Rosenkränze oder Schmuck.
  8. Esse und trinke niemals berauschende Stoffe, noch kaue *pan*, noch rieche an Duftstoffen, noch rauche Tabak, noch kaue oder rieche Opium; erhebe deine Hände und beuge deinen Kopf nicht in Gegenwart von Götzenbildern oder von Menschen.
  9. Nimm nicht das Leben von anderen, noch drohe persönliche Gewalt an, noch lege ein verdammendes Zeugnis ab, noch nimm irgendetwas mit Gewalt zu dir.
  10. Lasse einen Mann eine Ehefrau und eine Frau einen Ehemann nehmen, lasse einen Mann nicht die Essensreste einer Frau zu sich nehmen, aber eine Frau darf dies mit denen eines Mannes, so wie es Sitte sein mag. Lasse die Frau dem Manne gehorchen.
  11. Nimm nicht die Tracht eines Bettelmönches an, noch erbitte Almosen, noch nimm Geschenke an. Hab keine Furcht vor Nekromantie, noch mache Gebrauch von ihr. Lerne kennen, bevor du vertraust. Die Treffen der Gläubigen (*Sadhus*) sind die einzigen Stätten zur Wallfahrt, aber verstehe, wer die Gläubigen (*Sadhus*) sind, bevor du sie grüßt.
  12. Lass den *Sadhus* nicht abergläubisch hinsichtlich der Tage, noch der Mondläufe, noch der Monate oder des Geschreis beim Auftauchen von Vögeln oder Tieren sein; lasse ihn nur nach dem Willen Gottes streben.“<sup>23</sup>

Fishers ursprünglicher Eindruck war im Großen und Ganzen korrekt. Mehr als drei Jahrhunderte lang waren die Saadh Ausgestoßene gewesen, die alle Formen von Polytheismus sowie die heiligsten Rituale und Glaubensvorstellungen der Brahmanen zurückgewiesen hatten. Seit der Gründung hatte der Saadhisismus als strenggläubige monotheistische Sekte fortgelebt, deren Angehörige einen asketischen Lebensstil pflegten, was eine Reihe von Europäern dazu veranlasste, sie mit

<sup>23</sup> Mohammed Taher, *Encyclopedic Survey of Islamic Culture* (Neu-Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1998), Bd. 10, 224-5.

der „Gesellschaft der Freunde“ in Verbindung zu bringen, möglicherweise weil sie, wie die Quäker, der Vorstellung einer fortschreitenden Erweckung offen gegenüberstanden: „Jedem Saadh, der annimmt, unter dem Einfluss desselben göttlichen Geistes zu stehen, von dem sie glauben, dass er auch ihren Gründervater beseelt hat“, so die Beobachtung Fishers, „steht es absolut frei, eigene Gedanken bei ihren religiösen Versammlungen öffentlich vorzutragen und wiederholen zu lassen. [...] Solange diese nicht im Widerspruch zu ihren überlieferten Überzeugungen stehen, wird niemand daran Anstoß nehmen.“<sup>24</sup>

Die Antworten, welche die Saadhs Anand Messeh gaben, scheinen zu bestätigen, dass sie glaubten, die Bibeln, die sie in Hardwar erhalten hatten, seien mit demselben „göttlichen Geist“ durchdrungen. Warum sonst hätten sie sich der mühevollen Arbeit unterzogen, sie von Hand zu kopieren? Ihre Antwort – dass dies nicht europäische Bücher seien, sondern dass vielmehr Gott sie gesandt habe – war kein Akt von „spektakulärem Widerstand“, wie Bhaba es sich ausmalt, sondern vielmehr die einfache Entgegennahme einer „von Gott eingegebenen“ Schrift, die ohne die Vermittlung von Menschen auskam (2 Tim 3, 16). Die Vorstellung der Saadhs, wonach die „belesenen Gelehrten“, die ihnen die Bücher ausgehändigt hatten, gleichzeitig „Engel“ waren, erscheint zudem als wörtliche Wiedergabe einer Bibelstelle, in der davon die Rede ist, dass Gott engelsgleiche Boten ausgesandt habe, um die in alle Winde verstreuten Auserwählten an einem Ort zu versammeln. „Gastfrei zu sein vergesset nicht“, hatte der heilige Paulus geschrieben, „denn dadurch haben etliche ohne ihr Wissen Engel beherbergt.“ (Hebr 13, 2) Noch hatten die Saadhs, wie Bhabha uns nahelegt, irgendeine beliebige „Hausgottheit“ in ihrer Bibel erkannt – eine Vorstellung, die auf fundamentale Weise mit ihrem strikten Monotheismus im Konflikt gestanden hätte –, sondern es war das genaue Gegenteil: die Bestätigung eines bereits tief verankerten Glaubens an den Einen Wahren Gott und ihre Anerkennung der Bibel als „Gottes Geschenk für uns“ – eine weitere Etappe in der Entwicklung einer Religion, deren Anhänger, vor vielen Generationen bereits, der Brahmanen und ihrer Hausgötter abgeschworen hatten. Daher ist es wenig verwunderlich, dass diese „armen“ Eingeborenen einen Text wertschätzten, der ihre eigenen traditionellen Glaubensvorstellungen bestätigte – und das in einer von Verboten und Kastenunterschieden bestimmten Welt, einer Welt, in der lediglich eine Elite heilige Schriften besitzen konnte, vom Lesen derselben gar nicht zu reden. Das Nachlassen des Einflusses der traditionellen religiösen Führer Indiens – zum Teil die Folge des Wirkens von Christen und ihres Buches – stellte entrechteten Gruppen wie den Saadhs eine größere Legitimation in Aussicht. Am Ende erscheint es, als ob ihre Reaktion auf eine Bibel, die sich auf unproblematische Weise mit ihrer eigenen Weltsicht in Einklang bringen ließ, weniger damit zu tun hatte, dass weiße Menschen sich zwischen die indische Landbe-

<sup>24</sup> *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany*, Juli 1819: 74.

völkerung und ihre religiösen Führer drängten, sondern vielmehr aus der dankbaren Erkenntnis entsprang, dass der Feind eines Feindes ein Freund ist.<sup>25</sup>

In seinem Eintreten für „eine Abkehr von den Unbeständigkeiten der Interpretation“ hin zu was er als „diskursive Transparenz“ bezeichnet, übergeht Bhabha die komplexe Dynamik des Lesens.<sup>26</sup> Und dadurch dass er eine Frage stellt und gleich auch beantwortet – „Und wie sah der Diskurs der Einheimischen aus? Wer könnte das sagen?“<sup>27</sup> –, umgeht er das Problem, wie und was die Saadhs tatsächlich an jenem Tag gelesen haben mögen. Stattdessen verlässt sich Bhabha auf eine kru- de Überinterpretation der Absichten der Eingeborenen, um sie jenen theoretischen Konzepten anzupassen, die *a priori* und durchgehend seine Lesart der Episode bestimmen: „Durch die merkwürdigen Fragen der Einheimischen hindurch können wir im historischen Rückblick sehen, wogegen sie durch das Hinterfragen der Präsenz des Englischen [...] Widerstand leisteten [...] Wenn die Einheimischen eine indische Version des Evangeliums verlangen spannen sie die Kräfte der Hybridität für sich ein, um sich der Taufe zu widersetzen und das Projekt der Bekehrung in eine unmögliche Lage zu bringen.“<sup>28</sup> Auf das Ende seiner Argumentation zusteuernd, schlägt Bhabha vor, dass die Geschichte gelesen werden sollte „als *Frage* der kolonialen Autorität, ein agonistischer Raum“, bestimmt von „Augenblicken bürgerlichen Ungehorsams [...] Zeichen spektakulären Widerstands. [...] War es dieser Geist schlauer Höflichkeit, der die einheimischen Christen dazu brachte, so lang mit Anund Messeh zu disputieren, um sich dann, bei der Erwähnung der Taufe, höflich zu entschuldigen: Jetzt müssen wir zur Ernte nach Hause ... vielleicht werden wir nächstes Jahr nach Meerut kommen“ (179-180).

„Viel eher als das Erforschen der Geschichte eines einzelnen Treffens, bei der ein Katechet das ‚englische Buch‘ mit Leuten aus einem Dorf diskutierte“, so schreibt ein Kritiker von Bhabhas Essay, wäre es hilfreich gewesen, „eine stärker historische Analyse der Reaktionen der Landbevölkerung“ zu unterbreiten.<sup>29</sup> Der Hinweis, dass die Saadhs, dadurch, dass sie sich artig entschuldigten, einen Akt „schlauer Höflichkeit“ vollzogen, mag den Zwecken von Bhabhas Argument entsprechen, aber ein genaueres Verständnis des Kontextes, in dem dieser Austausch über Taufe stattfindet, legt den Schluss nahe, wo die „diskursive Transparenz“ tatsächlich liegt. Anfang Mai, zur Hochzeit der Erntesaison, hätte es für den Kate-

<sup>25</sup> In ihrer hellsichtigen Kritik von Bhabhas Essay nähert sich Rosinka Chaudhuri dem Problem aus der Perspektive einer anderen Klasse indischer Leser an, nämlich jener Gebildeten aus der Mittelschicht, die sich für einen ausgeweiteten Zugang zu europäischer Bildung aussprachen, was in Einklang mit ihren eigenen gesellschaftlichen Bestrebungen stand. Siehe: Rosinka Chaudhuri, *Gentlemen Poets in Colonial Bengal: Emergent Nationalism and the Orientalist Project* (Kalkutta: Seagull, 2002), 10-7.

<sup>26</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*, 154-5.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>29</sup> David Jefferess, *Postcolonial Resistance: Culture, Liberation and Transformation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 40-1.

cheten wenig Veranlassung gegeben, den Worten dieser armen Subsistenzbauern, die sich nach Hause begeben mussten, um dort ihre Ernte einzubringen, keinen Glauben zu schenken. Angesichts der Tatsache, dass die Wallfahrt ihnen auferlegte, 80 Meilen hin zur Missionsstation und zurück zu reisen – dies möglicherweise zu Fuß, ohne angemessene Verpflegung und zur heißesten Zeit des Jahres –, ist es kaum verwunderlich, dass sie zögerlich waren, Anands Vorschlag aufzugreifen.

Nichtsdestotrotz fährt Bhabha fort, indem er argumentiert, die Weigerung der Pilger, die Kommunion zu empfangen, sollte ebenfalls als ein „Modus diskursiver Störung“ betrachtet werden, welcher „die logische Ordnung des Diskurses der Autorität“ herausfordere.<sup>30</sup> Im Indien des 19. Jahrhunderts lag nichts besonders Subversives in der Weigerung, die Eucharistie mit den Missionaren mit zu feiern, weil „die Europäer das Fleisch von Kühen essen“. Der tatsächliche „Diskurs der Autorität“, von dem die Antwort der Saadhs Zeugnis ablegt, war der Kodex der Brahmanen zu Reinheit und Verboten. Die zwei unverzeihlichen Sünden in der hinduistischen Gesellschaft bestanden darin, Rindfleisch zu essen und, daraus folgend, mit jenen zusammen zu speisen, die dies tun. Beide Handlungen waren Anlass genug für den völligen Ausschluss aus der Kaste. Hätten sie zusammen mit den Missionaren die Kommunion eingenommen, wären die Saadhs Gefahr gelaufen, die wenigen wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Rechte zu verlieren, die sie besaßen. Ihre Zurückweisung des Sakraments war weniger Widerstand gegen „die wunderbare Äquivalenz von Gott und Engländern“<sup>31</sup> als ein Ausdruck echter Angst – Angst vor wirtschaftlicher Exilierung, sozialem Ausschluss und physischer Gewalt. Wie einer der Saadhs später bemerkte: „Wir werden schon genug verfolgt [...], aber wenn wir auch noch Rindfleisch und Schweineblut äßen, was würde dann aus uns werden?“<sup>32</sup>

Angesichts solcher Spannungen brachten viele koloniale Verwaltungsbeamte ihre Ablehnung der Einführung christlicher Rituale zum Ausdruck, welche zur Unterminierung einheimischer Hierarchien führen könnten. Derweil war das Regelwerk der Missionare, welches die Verabreichung der Kommunion ordnete und ihr Legitimation gab, weit entfernt davon, genau festgelegt zu sein. Einige christliche Gemeinden nahmen eine liberale Haltung bezüglich der Bewahrung von Kastenunterschieden und des Verbots des Kommensalismus (Tischgemeinschaft) ein, während andere auf der Abschaffung des Kastenwesens unter Gläubigen beharrten und für eine stärker inklusive Kommunion eintraten. Andere wiederum betrachte-

<sup>30</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*, 176.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>32</sup> *Missionary Register*, Mai 1818: 206. Diese letzte Aussage könnte auf anti-christliche Propaganda der Brahmanen verweisen, die zu dem Gerücht führte, die Eucharistie schließe den Verzehr von Rindfleisch und Schweineblut ein. Für eine umfassende Erörterung der Kontroverse siehe: Duncan B. Forrester, „Commensalism and Christian Mission: The Indian Case,” in id., *Forrester on Christian Ethics and Practical Theology: Collected Writings on Christianity, India, and the Social Order* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 125-34.



ten das Problem nur als einen „zivilrechtlichen Unterschied“ und machten Vorkehrungen, wonach „die Konvertiten aus verschiedenen Kasten [...] nicht einmal gemeinsam am Abendmahl teilnahmen.“ Solche adaptiven Praktiken wurden von Richard Heber toleriert, als dieser 1823 Bischof von Kalkutta wurde, während sein Nachfolger Daniel Wilson eine härtere Gangart gegenüber Kastenunterschieden und getrennter Kommunion einnahm.<sup>33</sup> Kurz gesagt, zu keiner Zeit hatte es eine einheitliche Herangehensweise bezüglich der praktischen Anwendung der Eucharistie in Indien gegeben. Zu behaupten, die Sakramente seien Teil einer „logische[n] Ordnung des Diskurses der Autorität“<sup>34</sup> gewesen, kommt der Nichtbeachtung jener heftigen konfessionellen Konflikte gleich, welche jahrhundertlang die Bedeutung der Kommunion in Europa umgeben hatten, Konflikte, die sich auf anderen Kontinenten und in anderen Kontexten fortsetzen sollten.

Ein letztes Problem bei Bhabhas Interpretation dieses Moments in der Anekdote hängt mit deren massiver Verkürzung zusammen.<sup>35</sup> Bhabhas elliptische Bearbeitung des Textes fasst das Geschehen so, dass der Eindruck entsteht, der Austausch über das Sakrament habe sich in Gegenwart der 500 Pilger am gleichen Tag abgespielt. Tatsächlich enthält die ursprüngliche Anekdote, so wie sie in *The Missionary Register* erschien, zwei Episoden. Der abschließende Austausch (überliefert in einem von Anand später selbst verfassten Bericht) fand eine Woche nach dem ursprünglichen Treffen statt, das heißt, als die 500 sich bereits „in verschiedene Richtungen verstreut“ hatten und der Katechet einige wenige Zurückgebliebene in einer benachbarten Ortschaft auffand. Es ist genau dieser Kontext, in dem wir die folgende Antwort wiederfinden: „Wenn unser ganzes Land dieses Sakrament annimmt, dann werden wir es auch tun.“ Mit anderen Worten: Hätte der Austausch am ersten Tag stattgefunden – während der jährlichen Versammlung, bei der die Saadhs Fragen bezüglich ihrer Doktrin entschieden<sup>36</sup> – dann wäre der Sprecher unter Umständen tatsächlich in der Lage gewesen, die Bedingungen von Anands Offerte zu akzeptieren.

Einige Saadhs kamen schließlich tatsächlich nach Meerut. Zu ihren christlichen Konvertiten zählte der Stammesälteste „David“ Jysingh, der von Fisher am 1. Weihnachtstag des Jahres 1818 getauft wurde und anschließend in seinem Heimatort Kowallee als Bibellektor und Lehrer fungierte. In Ermangelung eines amtierenden Geistlichen integrierten die Mitglieder der Gemeinde derweil eigene Formen der Taufe und Kommunion in ihre religiöse Praxis.<sup>37</sup> Im darauffolgenden Jahr

<sup>33</sup> *Missionary Chronicle*, Jg. 6 (1838), 72.

<sup>34</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*, 176.

<sup>35</sup> Neben der Auslassung von Textstellen enthält Bhabhas Transkription der Episode nicht weniger als sechs Abweichungen, zumeist orthografischer Art, von dem ursprünglichen Bericht aus dem *Missionary Register*.

<sup>36</sup> John Evans, *A Sketch of the Denominations of the Christian World* (Amherst: Adams, 1832), 228–30.

<sup>37</sup> „Die Unterhaltungen mit ihnen offenbarten fortwährend, wie sie der Herrschaft menschlicher Furcht unterstanden, obwohl es sich um arme und unwissende Landbevölkerung handelte. ‚Was

organisierte Fisher, mithilfe von Geldmitteln, die von wohlgesonnenen indischen und europäischen Spendern stammten, den Bau einer Schule und einer Kapelle „auf Grundlage eines festen Plans“, dadurch eine neue Siedlung absteckend, welcher die Saadhs später in Andenken an ihren Schirmherren den Namen „Henreepore“ verliehen.<sup>38</sup> In Henreepore schickten die Saadhs ihre Kinder zur Schule, nahmen sonntäglich am Gottesdienst in der Kapelle teil und lebten weiterhin unter dem Schutz der Church Missionary Society. In den folgenden Jahren scheint das Verhältnis zwischen den Saadhs in Henreepore und den europäischen Christen von gegenseitigem Respekt und von Dialog geprägt gewesen zu sein, was den Saadhs hohes Ansehen unter jenen Missionaren einbrachte, mit denen sie in Kontakt kamen.<sup>39</sup> Ihre anhaltende Überzeugung, dass die christliche Bibel mit ihren eigenen heiligen Schriften vereinbar war, ist verständlich. Mehr als anderthalb Jahrhunderte zuvor hatten sie durch den *Adi Updesh* christliche Doktrin aufgenommen. Als sie beim Jahrmarkt von Hardwar das ehrwürdige Geschenk des Missionars erhielten, stellten sie lediglich eine Verbindung zu ihrer eigenen religiösen Vergangenheit wieder her. Ihr Diskurs war ebenfalls einer, der bereits hybrid war.

### 3 Wer war Anand Messeh?

Und wie verhält es sich nun mit Anand Messeh, jenem Bibellektor, der im Mai 1817 „überstürzt und erregt eine Reise von seiner Mission in Meerut“ antrat? Seitdem er der Vergessenheit entrissen wurde, hat dieser einfache Katechet mit seinem

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werden alle unsere Brüder sagen! Was werden die Nachbarn denken!“, war als Antwort stets zur Hand auf alle [von Anund vorgebrachten] Argumente. Eine Art Kompromiss wurde von ihnen vorgeschlagen. ‚Du geh hin‘, sagten sie zu Anund, ‚und predige den Gott Messias zu den Nachbarn im Dorf und finde heraus, was sie denken, und komm zurück und berichte uns: und in der Zwischenzeit werden wir Brot und Wasser zu uns nehmen und Christus‘ gedenken; und da wir keinen Pater haben, werden wir selbst unsere Stirn mit Wasser besprengen und feierlich geloben, an Christus zu glauben!‘“ *Missionary Register*, Mai 1818: 205-6. Die Wasserkommunion wurde durch die gesamte Geschichte des Christentums hindurch praktiziert, besonders in Abwesenheit amtierender Geistlicher und bei Minderheiten wie den Saadhs, bei denen Alkohol verboten war. Sie wird noch immer angewandt von Unitariern, Methodisten und den „Heiligen der letzten Tage“. Siehe: Hans Leitzmann, *Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 202-3. David Jysingh beschrieb gegenüber Fisher, wie die Saadhs letztendlich die Eucharistie praktizierten: „Am Abend wird das Brot auf eine schmale Erhebung abgelegt und nach einem kurzen, im Stegreif vorgetragenen Gebet unter den Anwesenden verteilt. Ein mit Brause gefülltes Gefäß, als ‚Schale der Brüderlichkeit‘ bezeichnet, wird ebenfalls herumgereicht.“ *Christian Herald and Seamans's Magazine*, Jg. 6 (1819): 217.

<sup>38</sup> *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East 1819-1820* (London: R. Watts, 1820), 144-5; James Hough, *The History of Christianity in India from the Commencement of the Christian Era* (London: Seeley and Burnside, Church Missionary House, 1839-1860), Bd. 5, 315-7.

<sup>39</sup> „Dies ist in Wahrheit eine heidnische Sekte, aber ihre Mitglieder übertreffen einige Christen dermaßen in der Milde ihres Gemüts und in der Reinheit ihres Lebens, dass ihnen eine Erwähnung in diesem Werk nicht verwehrt werden konnte.“ Evans, *Denominations of the Christian World*, 230.

Eifer, indische Landsleute zu taufen, in postkolonialen Studien eine Präsenz aus zweiter Hand und von zweitem Rang angenommen. Maßgeschneidert dafür, die Komplizenschaft von indischen Untertanen mit europäischer Macht zu repräsentieren, ist die Geschichte seines vermaledeiten Eifers seit seiner Wiederauferstehung von den Toten im Jahr 1985 immer wieder neu und anders erzählt worden. Ein Interpret erspät in der Anekdote den Beleg für die Naivität eines eingeborenen Konvertiten, welcher „der Autorität der Druckkultur und im speziellen der europäischen Form der Wissensvermittlung“ vollends zugestimmt habe.<sup>40</sup> Für einen anderen „scheint die Figur des Anund Messeh das perfekte Beispiel dafür zu sein, wie der Eingeborene sich danach sehnt, so wie der Kolonisator zu werden – in Kleidung, Sitten und Glauben –, dadurch das vorgebliche Wohlwollen des Kolonisators bekräftigend, derweil man in Wirklichkeit dessen Überlegenheit bekräftigt; Anund Messeh kann *anglizisiert* werden, ein Funktionsträger der englischen Herrschaft, aber er kann nicht englisch werden.“<sup>41</sup> Der arme Anand Messeh!

Nach seinem eigenen Zeugnis wurde Paramanand in einem Dorf in der Nähe von Delhi geboren, womöglich irgendwann in den 1790er Jahren. Benannt nach einem der berühmtesten Dichterheiligen der Hindus aus dem 16. Jahrhundert,<sup>42</sup> war er ein frommes Mitglied der Kaste der Brahmanen, Indiens elitärer religiöser Klasse. Schon in jungen Jahren wurde er ein Gelehrter und fungierte als Geistlicher unter seinen Landsleuten. Später ließ er sich in Delhi nieder, wo er, im Einklang mit seinem Amt, regelmäßig Lesungen aus den hinduistischen Schriften vor seinen großenteils des Lesens unkundigen Anhängern abhielt, die hinduistische Religion lehrte und als Geistlicher Trauungen und Beisetzungen leitete. So gefestigt war er in seinem Glauben an den Brahmanismus, dass er „völlig überzeugt war, dass unsere Bildnisse wahre Götter und alle anderen Religionen falsch seien.“<sup>43</sup>

Um das Jahr 1812 herum jedoch zeigte er sich in zunehmendem Maße unzufrieden mit der Religion, in die er hineingeboren worden war. In seinen Memoiren beschreibt er den Augenblick seiner Ernüchterung:

Der Ort lag nicht weit entfernt und ich eilte dorthin und bat um die Erlaubnis, diesen wundersamen Gott betrachten zu dürfen. Die Brahmanen standen um mich herum und befahlen mir, mich zurückzuziehen. Jedoch davon überzeugt, dass, wenn dies wirklich Gott sei, seine Macht groß sein müsse und er dazu in der Lage wäre, mein Herz zu reinigen und es wie pures Gold zu machen, entschloss ich mich dazu, mich auf meine Stärke zu verlassen

<sup>40</sup> Vanessa Smith, *Literary Culture and the Pacific: Nineteenth-Century Textual Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 95.

<sup>41</sup> Jefferess, *Postcolonial Resistance*, 43.

<sup>42</sup> Siehe: A. Whitney Sanford, *Singing Krishna: Sound Becomes Sight in Paramanand's Poetry* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

<sup>43</sup> Paramanands Memoiren sind wiedergegeben in: Michael Wilkinson, *Memorials of an Indian Missionary* (London: Wertheim, Macintosh and Hunt, 1857), 187ff.

und allen Widerstand zu durchbrechen und ihn zu berühren. Das tat ich auch, erreichte mein Ziel und rieb meinen Messingring über das Götzenbild, jedoch war es immer noch ein Messingring. Ich erkannte, dass das Götzenbild ein großer schwarzer Stein war, den man grob in eine menschliche Gestalt mit vier Händen gehauen hatte. Es war ungefähr zwei Fuß hoch. Sechs Monate lang jedes Jahr ist es für gewöhnlich mit Schnee bedeckt und dadurch vor Bloßstellung geschützt, aber in den wärmeren Monaten, dann wenn die Sonne den Schnee hat wegschmelzen lassen, drängen sich tausende aus allen Richtungen heran, um aus der Ferne einen Blick zu erhaschen, um die üblichen Tribute zu offerieren und um sich selbst einen eingebildeten Nutzen durch das Betrachten zu verschaffen. Ich meinerseits war angewidert, erledigt und von Erschöpfung übermannt – und ich kehrte mit einem Gefühl der Enttäuschung nach Hause zurück.“<sup>44</sup>

Es dauerte nicht lange und er wurde von John Chamberlain, einem baptistischen Missionar in Sirdhana, als Übersetzer eingestellt, derweil er sich immer stärker zu den Schriften der Christen hingezogen fühlte: „Ich verharnte [...] für längere Zeit zwischen zwei Ansichten. Schließlich eröffnete ich dem Missionar, dass ich ein Christ werden wollte; aber ich erbebt, als ich das sagte, und innerhalb meiner eigenen vier Wände war ich ein strengerer und abergläubigerer Hindu denn je. Ich fürchtete die möglichen Konsequenzen des Zorns meiner eigenen Götzen.“<sup>45</sup> Anschließend suchte er mehrmals um die Taufe nach, was von Chamberlain wiederholt abgelehnt wurde, da dieser von den Glaubensgelübden seines einheimischen Gehilfen nicht überzeugt war.

Noch am 10. März 1814, nur einen Monat bevor Paramanand Chamberlain zum Jahrmarkt nach Hardwar begleitete, hatte der Missionar weiterhin Zweifel: „Die Hindus werden sehr zurückhaltend“, schrieb er, „was mit Paramanunda zusammenhängt, wie ich annehme.“<sup>46</sup> Einen Monat später wurde der Verdacht Chamberlains zur Gewissheit:

Ich erinnere mich besonders an ein Vorkommnis, als wir, aus Hardwar zurückkehrend, wo der Missionar gewesen war, um Bücher unter jenen Eingeborenen zu verteilen, die jährlich diesen Ort aufsuchen, zur Nacht Rast gemacht und unseren abendlichen christlichen Gottesdienst abgehalten hatten. Ich suchte nach einer Möglichkeit, im Geheimen meine eigenen Gebete zu verrichten und war, nachdem ich einen geeigneten Platz im Schatten gefunden, mein Götzenbild *gewaschen und gereinigt* sowie es auf seinem Platz aufgestellt hatte, mit meinen Kniefällen und Gebeten beschäftigt, als der Missionar mich plötzlich inmitten meines Treibens überraschte. Ich war verwirrt und beschämt, meiner eigenen Doppelzüngigkeit und Torheit gewahr: Je-

<sup>44</sup> Wilkinson, *Memorials*, 188-9.

<sup>45</sup> Wilkinson, *Memorials*, 188-191.

<sup>46</sup> Yates, *Memoirs of Mr. John Chamberlain*, 345.

doch von solcher Macht waren meine angeborenen Auffassungen, wonach, falls die hinduistischen Götzen tatsächlich Götter waren, ihre Rache für meine Missachtung ihrer Autorität und Macht unerträglich sein werde und sie mich mit schmerzhaften Krankheiten plagen oder mit Lepra überziehen würden. Daher nahm ich an den Morgen- und Abendgebeten des Missionars teil und vollzog meinen eigenen Götzendienst, bevor ich mich zur Ruhe begab; daran glaubend, dass, falls ich durch den Kontakt mit Christen verunreinigt werde, dies meine Reinigung sichere.<sup>47</sup>

Nachdem sie nach Sirdhana zurückgekehrt waren, schrieb der entnervte Chamberlain: „Purumamunda hat mir Kummer bereitet, aber er erscheint reumütig und wünscht, getauft zu werden; ich scheue jedoch davor zurück, ihn zu taufen.“<sup>48</sup> Nach Chamberlains Weggang nach Serampore im späteren Verlauf des Jahres hielt sich Paramanand an den CMS-Missionar Mr. Thompson, wiederum um die Taufe bittend, was ihm abermals verweigert wurde. Kurz darauf erfuhr er die gleiche Reaktion beim Kaplan in Meerut.<sup>49</sup>

Im Jahr 1815 begegnen wir Paramanand als Angestellten unter der Oberaufsicht von Reverend Henry Fisher, einem Vertreter der Church Missionary Society in Meerut. Da er die Verantwortung für fünf Schulen im Bezirk trug, bezog Paramanand ein großräumiges Quartier, das von der CMS oberhalb des Großen Tores der Stadt zur Verfügung gestellt worden war, und hielt dort Bibelstunden für die lokale Bevölkerung ab.<sup>50</sup> Ein Jahr später verwirklichten sich seine Ambitionen und Fisher, der „allen Grund sah, an die Aufrichtigkeit seiner christlichen Gelübde zu glauben, taufte ihn am 1. Weihnachtstag des Jahres 1816, als er den Namen Anund Messee annahm.“<sup>51</sup>

Am 6. Mai 1817 reiste Anand nicht, wie Bhabha glauben machen will, „hastig und aufgeregt von seiner Missionsstation in Meerut zu einem ganz in der Nähe

<sup>47</sup> Wilkinson, *Memorials*, 191-2.

<sup>48</sup> Yates, *Memoirs of Mr. John Chamberlain*, 353. Es ist anzunehmen, dass Chamberlains Befürchtung mit der Tatsache in Verbindung stand, dass die britischen Missionare sich in zunehmendem Maße zurückhaltend hinsichtlich der Übernahme geistlicher Ämter in der Kirche durch einheimische Konvertiten zeigten. Ein Jahrhundert zuvor waren jesuitische Missionare dadurch in Verruf geraten, dass sie Massentaufen von Nichtgläubigen abhielten in dem Versuch, ihren Erfolg in Indien und anderswo herauszuheben. Im Jahr 1833 mahnte ein von einer Anzahl führender Mitglieder der Missionsgesellschaften unterzeichneter offener Brief an die *Calcutta Review* zur Zurückhaltung gegenüber der Taufe von Personen „aus der Liebe zu einer Bereicherung und einem schlechten Ruf heraus.“ (Juli 1833: 330). *The Wesleyan Missionary Register* kehrte im Jahr 1860 auf dieses Thema zurück: „Als die Briten Ceylon in Besitz nahmen, gab es dort 500.000 getaufte Eingeborene, Mitglieder der holländischen Kirche. Man hatte sie für ihre rein nominellen Gelübde zum Christentum mit weltlichen Hoffnungen und mit weltlichen Ängsten gewonnen. Lediglich getauften Einheimischen stand der Weg zu Stellungen im öffentlichen Dienst frei und wenn ein Mann vom Christentum abfiel, kostete ihn dies etwas mehr als seine Stellung.“ *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 25. Mai 1860: 107.

<sup>49</sup> Wilkinson, *Memorials*, 193.

<sup>50</sup> *Missionary Register*, 1818: 11.

<sup>51</sup> Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, Bd. 4, 474-5.

von Delhi gelegen“<sup>52</sup>, sondern in Wirklichkeit machte er sich auf den Weg nach Delhi, um seine Frau und Familie zu besuchen. Einige Zeit darauf hielt er sich bei einem hinduistischen Tempel in der Stadt auf, wo er, im Schatten einiger Bäume, auf „eine Anzahl von Fremden aus mehreren Ortschaften westlich von Delhi“ traf, womöglich einige derselben Saadh-„Konvertiten“, die er beim Jahrmarkt von Hardwar getroffen hatte. Acht Monate später erschien in der religiösen Presse die erste von mehreren bemerkenswerten Erzählungen, welche der brahmanische Konvertit angefertigt hatte. Nachdem man seit der Ankunft in Indien nur wenige Bekehrungen hatte verbuchen können, ist es kaum überraschend, dass sich innerhalb der Gemeinschaft der Missionare eine gewisse Begeisterung einstellte angesichts der Erzählung von den 500 seltsamen Konvertiten, die in der Ausgabe des *Missionary Register* vom Januar 1818 abgedruckt wurde. Aber die Begeisterung war kurzlebig, und sehr bald wurden schwere Zweifel hinsichtlich ihrer Authentizität angemeldet. Derweil er keinen Grund dafür hatte, „die wesentlichen Punkte der Erzählung“ anzuzweifeln, sah sich Thomason (der sie dem *Register* ursprünglich unterbreitet hatte) im Juli dazu gezwungen, Vorsicht anzumahnen, da er den Verdacht hatte dass Anands Geschichte „weniger bemerkenswert, als man es uns bedeutet hatte“, gewesen sei.<sup>53</sup> Auf Thomasons Bitte hin unterzog Leutnant Macdonald, der in Delhi stationiert war, Anand im Juni einem Kreuzverhör über die Vorkommnisse jenes Tages, musste aber mit Bedauern feststellen, dass er nicht in der Lage, die Geschichte von den Saadhs selbst bestätigen zu lassen und somit „außerstande sei, über die Angelegenheit exklusiv zu sprechen“. „Ohne solch eine persönliche Nachforschung“ fühlte auch er sich „in keiner Weise kompetent“ den Bericht über die Vorkommnisse zu bewerten.<sup>54</sup> Ein Jahr später war Anands Demütigung komplett, als das *Asiatic Journal* enthüllte, man habe ihn „wiederholt gewarnt, sich nicht von seiner blühenden Phantasie zu übertriebenen Darstellungen dessen verleiten zu lassen, was er der Aufmerksamkeit und der Mitteilung für Wert erachten möge.“<sup>55</sup>

Obwohl er für die Church Missionary Society möglicherweise peinlich werden konnte, blieb der erste brahmanische Konvertit nichtsdestotrotz eine wertvolle Trophäe – und wertvoll auch auf andere Weise – für die Missionare, die ermutigende Erzählungen von Bekehrungen Eingeborener in einer Zeit, da die Resultate mager waren, bitter nötig hatten. In den darauffolgenden Jahren hatte Anand noch

<sup>52</sup> Bhabha, *Die Verortung der Kultur*, 152.

<sup>53</sup> *Missionary Register*, Januar 1818: 20.

<sup>54</sup> Im Mai 1818 unterrichtete der Herausgeber des *Missionary Register* seine Leser: „Wie in unserem früheren Artikel zu diesem Gegenstand nachzulesen ist, hat Mr. Thomason vorgeschlagen, Vorsicht walten zu lassen dabei, diesen Informationen Glauben zu schenken, zumindest in vollem Umfang, bis die Einzelheiten genauer bekannt seien. In einem Brief, welcher der jüngsten Botschaft beigelegt war, weist er auf diese Vorsicht erneut hin; und er stellt fest, dass [...] diese in einigen Punkten von jenen abweicht.“ *Missionary Register*, Mai 1818: 206.

<sup>55</sup> *Asiatic Journal*, Juli 1819: 75.

spektakulärere Geschichten zu erzählen, in denen er von seiner Verfolgung durch Hindus und Moslems berichtete und darüber, wie er über viele Eingeborene, mit denen er über das Christentum sprach, rhetorisch triumphierte. Es scheint, als habe er sich in Meerut große Mühe gegeben, Fisher davon zu überzeugen, dass er sich von seinen alten Sitten abgewandt habe. Fisher beschreibt, was nach einer von ihm gehaltenen Predigt über die grausamen Strafen, welche von Brahmanen auferlegt wurden, geschah:

Ich fragte meine kleine Gemeinde, was sie von all dem hielten. Sie saßen still, die Augen niedergeschlagen und schwer seufzend. Nach geraumer Zeit wandte sich Anund an Matthew Phiroodeen und, seine Arme um seinen Hals schlingend, rief mit einem tiefberührenden Ausdruck von Zuneigung und Dankbarkeit gegenüber Gott aus: „Ach, mein Bruder! mein Bruder! solche Teufel waren auch wir einst! aber jetzt (und er erhob seine Augen zum Himmel und richtete seinen ganzen Körper auf), Jesus! Jesus! mein Gott! mein Retter!“ Es war sehr bewegend.<sup>56</sup>

Zweifelsohne ermutigt von solch exemplarischen Verhalten – wiewohl Fishers ambivalente Wortwahl „affecting“ (bewegend/affektiert, Anm. d. Ü.) hier interessant ist –, gründete Fisher um das Jahr 1820 herum das Saadh-Dorf Henreepore, wo er Anand mitsamt Familie im neuerrichteten Missionshaus einsetzte.<sup>57</sup> Doch schon bald schielte Anand nach höheren Weihen. Im Dezember 1824 wurde er Reginald Heber vorgestellt, dem Bischof von Kalkutta. Als Fisher den Bischof darum bat, seinen eingeborenen Katecheten die Weihe zu verleihen, zeigte sich Heber alles andere als beeindruckt: „Er ist ein hochgewachsener, grobschlächtig aussehender Mann, dessen Gesichtszüge kaum auf besonderen Intellekt hindeuten.“<sup>58</sup> Anfang des Jahres 1826 begegnen wir Anand als einem Lehrer von Eingeborenen in Delhi, wo er der strikten Überwachung von Fishers Sohn unterstand, der dort als Kaplan wirkte. Doch schon bald darauf erregte er abermals das Missfallen des Klerus und wurde nach dem etwa 70 Meilen nördlichen gelegenen Karnal abgeschoben, auf Betreiben des Co-Kaplans in Kanpur: „in der Hoffnung, dass wir von hieran beobachten können, dass sich ein gnadenvoller Zweck durch die Wandlung seiner Bestimmung ausdrücke.“<sup>59</sup>

Im Laufe des folgenden Jahrzehnts scheint Anand das Vertrauen der Amtskirche zurückgewonnen zu haben. Am 21. Juni 1836 schrieb Bischof Wilson, der Nachfolger von Heber, aus Simla, dass er bei seinem Besuch in Meerut das „eigentümliche Vergnügen“ gehabt habe, Anand zu befragen, und er hielt ihn nun „für

<sup>56</sup> C. M. S. Report 21, 181. *Missionary Register* 1821: 471, 472.

<sup>57</sup> Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, Bd. 5, 315-7.

<sup>58</sup> Reginald Heber, *Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India* (Philadelphia: Carey, 1828), Bd. 1, 441.

<sup>59</sup> *Missionary Register*, Februar 1828: 100.

einen sehr außergewöhnlichen Mann; gewandt, stark, einfach in seiner Hingabe zu Christus, gut unterwiesen in der Bibel, demütig.“ Bei diesem Treffen unterbreitete der Katechet einen Brief des verstorbenen Bischof Heber, angeblich im Jahr 1824 geschrieben, „der mich tief berührte.“ Er schloss damit, Anand, „im Falle meines Todes, wem auch immer mir als Bischof von Kalkutta folgen möge“ anzuempfehlen. Wilson ordinierte Anand am 11. November, eine Feier, welche der Bischof „sehr bewegend“ fand, „da er der erste Brahmane ist, der von unserer Kirche ordiniert wurde. Er ist eine ausgezeichnete, edle Gestalt, spirituell ausgerichtet, wohlbelesen in der Heiligen Schrift, voller Schlichtheit und Hingabe zu Christus, derweil tapfer wie ein Löwe. Er hat so wenig von den eingeborenen Fehlern des Dünkels und des Mystizismus an sich, wie ich dies noch nie beobachtet habe.“<sup>60</sup>

Im Jahr 1842 wurde Reverend Messiah als Geistlicher der CMS in Meerut eingesetzt, eine Stellung, die ihm und seiner Familie einen ansehnlichen Wohnsitz garantierte, möglicherweise einen oder zwei Diener sowie ein regelmäßiges Einkommen von 80 Rupien im Monat.<sup>61</sup> Innerhalb weniger Monate wurde er jedoch erneut zur *persona non grata*. „Schwerwiegende Vorwürfe“, bestätigt von der CMS, wurden gegen ihn erhoben, was zu seiner Entlassung führte. Rückblickend behauptete Bischof Wilson, womöglich aus einem Anflug von Verlegenheit heraus, dass er schon immer Vorbehalte gegenüber Anands Ehefrau gehabt habe, die „eine Heidin blieb und ihr Einfluss war unheilvoll.“<sup>62</sup> Es gibt Andeutungen in Wilsons Bericht, wonach der Konvertit auf seine alten brahmanischen Sitten zurückverfallen war, wobei seine jüngsten Verfehlungen beschrieben wurden als Folge „des großen Wagnisses, eingeborene Konvertiten als Anwärter auf heilige Ämter in Vorschlag zu bringen, derweil ihre erwachsenen Kinder und Familienmitglieder Heiden bleiben.“ Zudem warnte Wilson vor der „Zweckmäßigkeit, eingeborenen Geistlichen ärztliche Tätigkeiten zu erlauben und sie unbegleitet mit der Absicht herumreisen zu lassen, das Evangelium zu verbreiten, wenn die anfallenden Kosten der Reise nachträglich von der Gemeinschaft getragen werden müssen.“<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Bishop Wilson's Journal Letters*, hrsg. Daniel Wilson (London: Nisbet, 1863), 182, 199.

<sup>61</sup> Raj Bahadur Sharma, *Christian Missions in North India, 1813-1913: A Case Study of Meerut Division and Debra Dun District* (Delhi: Mittal, 1988), 87-8.

<sup>62</sup> Josiah Bateman, *The Life of Rev. Daniel Wilson* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860), 491.

<sup>63</sup> Der Verweis auf eine ärztliche Tätigkeit deutet möglicherweise auf eine Opiumabhängigkeit hin, die viele Jahre später ans Licht kam, als ein Missionar, der Anand beschäftigt hatte, um von ihm Hindi zu lernen, die Royal Commission davon unterrichtete, dass „Paramanund [...] über viele Jahre hinweg, derweil er noch Anhänger des Hinduismus war, die Angewohnheit der Einnahme von Opium hatte. Jede erdenkliche Anstrengung wurde unternommen, um ihn von der Angewohnheit zu heilen, aber alles war vergebens. Ich habe ihn oftmals dabei beobachtet, wie er mit geschlossenen Augen an meiner Seite schritt, und nur unter größten Anstrengungen gelang es mir, ihn wachzuhalten, während er mich in der Sprache unterrichtete. Er selbst hat oft gesagt, dass ihm die Schande seiner Lage tiefbewusst sei, dass er aber unter gar keinen Umständen ohne seine tägliche Dosis Opium leben könne.“ Zeugnis abgelegt von Thomas Evans in Kalkutta am 23. November 1893: *The First Report of the Royal Commission on Opium* (London: HMSO, 1894), II: 46.



Im Jahr 1845 war er abermals als „amtierender Geistlicher“ eingestellt, diesmal in Agra, nachdem sein Ansehen zum wiederholten Male wiederhergestellt worden war, „ehrwürdig in seinem Alter und, obwohl nicht in der Lage, besonders aktiv Dienst zu verüben, [...] eine Zierde für seinen heiligen Charakter.“ Alle früheren Verfehlungen waren wiederum vergeben und es wurde berichtet, dass die Hoffnungen hinsichtlich Anands spiritueller Standfestigkeit sich nun „im Übermaß erfüllt“ hätten.<sup>64</sup> Jedoch im Mai 1857, als die „Große Meuterei“ um sich griff und die anderen Missionare Zuflucht in der Festung von Agra fanden, hatte Anand ganz andere Absichten. Der letzte Bericht, den wir besitzen, findet sich in einer Depesche vom 26. Juli: „Sie werden mit Bedauern vernehmen, dass die meisten unserer einheimischen Christen in beklagenswerter Weise im Angesicht der gegenwärtigen Prüfungen versagt haben. Ich hatte die schmerzliche Pflicht, Paramanund, einen unserer Prediger, auszuschließen, nachdem er die Tracht eines *Byragee* bzw. eines heiligen Hindu angenommen hatte! Und er hat Christus abgeschworen!“<sup>65</sup> Es sieht so aus, als ob er sich von Agra aus auf den Weg zur Geburtsstätte von Krishna in Mathura machte, wo, wie der *Baptist Missionary Herald* berichtete, Paramanands „Annahme der traditionellen Tracht ihn nicht vor Verrat schützte und es wird behauptet, er sei, von der Hand eines grausamen Moslems erschlagen, ums Leben gekommen.“<sup>66</sup>

Die Verhaltensregeln der Mimikry scheinen tatsächlich an jenem Tag in dem Wäldchen bei Delhi in Kraft gewesen zu sein, aber nicht dergestalt, wie Bhabha es sich ausmalt. Könnte es nicht sein, dass der Katechet, der den „biblischen Diskurs“ seiner englischen Herren anwandte, im Endeffekt der wahre Imitator gewesen ist? Waren seine wiederholten Bekundungen zu christlichem Glauben im Endeffekt Teil einer vier Jahrzehnte andauernden Kampagne „schlauer Höflichkeit“, sein Verlangen nach Taufe und Ordination eine äußere Zurschaustellung, welche eine tieferliegende Verbundenheit mit jener Religion verschleierte, in die er hineingeboren worden war? Wenn das der Fall ist, dann erscheint seine Antwort gegenüber den Saadhs im Jahr 1817 – „Diese Bücher lehren euch die Religion der europäischen Sahibs. Es ist IHR Buch“ – plötzlich weitaus weniger als Ausdruck von Glauben an die Religion der weißen Männer, eher wie eine Verlautbarung des religiösen und kulturellen Skeptizismus. Könnte es nicht sein, dass der Mann, der schon als kleiner Junge im Erzählen mysteriöser Geschichten über wundersame und umkehrbare Verwandlungen geschult worden war – Geschichten, welche dazu bestimmt waren, auf den Seiten des *Missionary Register* wieder aufzutauchen –, die ganze Zeit über nur eine Jahrhunderte alte Praxis imitierte, die er von seinen brahmanischen Lehrmeistern ererbt hatte?

<sup>64</sup> Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, Bd. 4, 475.

<sup>65</sup> Brief von Thomas Evans, 26. Juli 1857. *Missionary Herald*, 1857: 725.

<sup>66</sup> *Missionary Herald*, 1857: 72. Siehe auch: Thomas Evans, *A Welshman in India: A Record of the Life of Thomas Evans, Missionary*, hrsg. David Hooper (London: Kingsgate, 1908), 252.

Das Letzte, was wir von Paramanand erfahren, stammt aus der Feder des Missionars Michael Wilkinson, der ihm die letzte Ehre in folgender Weise erwies: „Sein milder und friedfertiger Charakter brachte ihm einen Respekt ein, der das übliche Maß übertraf. Vor allem unter den Sikhs wurde er wirklich verehrt. Möge er am Ende Frieden finden!“<sup>67</sup> Der Nachgeordnete kann als furchteinflößende Figur erscheinen, die dann wieder auftaucht und neue Geschichten vorträgt, wenn man es am wenigsten erwartet. Und wie die Geschichte der Bibel, der Pilger und des Katecheten zeigt, können die Erfahrungen der Vergangenheit unendlich komplexer sein, als sie im ersten Licht erscheinen.

#### 4 Schlussfolgerung

Spiele die Lebensumstände indischer Bauern im Jahr 1817 im Endeffekt *wirklich* eine Rolle? Ich denke, sie tun es. Sollten Historiker sich mit der Frage auseinandersetzen, was Ausgestoßene vor zwei Jahrhunderten *tatsächlich* über die Bibel dachten? Ich denke, sie sollten. Die Frage, die Anand Messeh gestellt hatte, „wer sind all diese Menschen?“ – eine Frage, die aus dem Verlangen heraus, andere zu verstehen, entstanden ist –, ist es stets wert, gestellt zu werden. Diese der Geschichte entnommene Anekdote ist nicht einfach, oder überhaupt, eine Erzählung über arme Hindus, die „schlaue Höflichkeit“ als ein Mittel kulturellen Widerstandes anwenden, noch über die Tendenz indigener Christen, für ihre europäischen Herren zu sprechen. In einer Welt, in der sich Brahmanen selbst als Christen reinkarnieren, Inder in Furcht voreinander leben und Zeichen als Wunder angenommen werden, können historische Details unbequem sein. Der gewaltsame Tod von Paramanand, jenem Christen, der ein Götzenanhänger wurde, steht stellvertretend nicht nur für die Herausforderungen, mit denen sich Standardvorstellungen über die Komplizenschaft von Eingeborenen im Kontext „kolonialer Autorität“ konfrontiert sehen, sondern dient auch als Mahnung, dass wir, wenn wir theoretische Abstraktionen wie „Hybridität“, „schlaue Höflichkeit“ und „Mimikry“ anwenden, aufpassen müssen, weder Individuen als geschichtslos erscheinen zu lassen, noch eine Geschichte ohne ihre Akteure zu schreiben.

*Aus dem Englischen von Jörg Zägel*

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<sup>67</sup> Wilkinson, *Memorials*, 202.

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# Empire at home

Janny de Jong

## Introduction

In the 1970s, the study of colonial empires had become “one of the deadest of dead fields within history,” one historian writes.<sup>1</sup> Another, describing her impressions about the field of imperial history as an undergraduate at a British university in roughly the same period, recalled that imperial studies seemed to be a very masculine enterprise, “centrally concerned with what chaps in the past, mainly of the pale variety, did to, or for, yet more chaps who were often not pale.” Linda Colley, specialist in British history and the author of the last quote, then proceeds with telling how very much the field has changed, and how mistaken she had been. Her conclusion reads that imperial history is anything but a boring, musty and fairly limited field. Quite the contrary: there were “few subjects more indispensable for forging a proper understanding both of this country and the world in general.”<sup>2</sup> Colley does not simply mean the history of the *impact* of the British Empire and of British inventions on the world.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, she puts forward that imperial history is much broader than that. For, she argues, the world may be post-colonial, post-imperial it is not. Imperial components and traditions are clearly visible in, for instance, India, China as well as the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The tremendous changes in the field of colonial and imperial history in the last two to three decades are remarkable indeed. There has been a veritable burst of scholarship on colonial and imperial issues. One of the most important changes is the inclusion of other disciplines and diverse methodologies. Influences from especially cultural and social studies have had a large bearing on the focus and content of imperial and colonial history.

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Linda Colley, “What is Imperial History Now?,” in *What is History Now?*, ed. David Cannadine (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 132-4.

<sup>3</sup> See Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2003) for an example of a historian who argues precisely this point.

<sup>4</sup> Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850* (Westminster, MD: Knopf, 2004), 378.

Since decolonisation, ‘colonial history’ had become a somewhat tainted, old-fashioned word. At many universities, the name of the specialisation changed into, for instance, non-western history, world or global history.<sup>5</sup> The perspective developed from a predominantly Eurocentric focus to one centred on internal or regional developments in the former colonies. What anthropologist Eric Wolf once ironically called “the people without history” needed a closer look and, of course, new, inclusive histories.<sup>6</sup> The area studies that were the result of this in due course posed new problems with regard to the definition of the region or area, the relation between the local and the broader contexts and the sometimes different perspectives of native and non-native scholars.<sup>7</sup> And then, in the late 1980s and 1990s, globalisation became a catchword. This had important consequences for historical research as well.<sup>8</sup>

Fresh insights were also called for with regard to the impact of colonialism and imperialism ‘at home.’ After all, these phenomena still cast their shadows on present day life, culture and politics. Also, to understand the West-European mental space of especially the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as politics, social issues and culture, it was deemed necessary to investigate the colonial history once again. This article aims to sketch these developments to see what importance these topics have for contemporary European studies.

### Perception of Europe and European Transformations

This article originally was presented at a scientific conference in 2010, at which some of the core questions of the Erasmus Mundus Master programme of Excellence *Euroculture: Europe in the Wider World* were critically examined as a basis for further scientific research. To my opinion, two of these questions are highly relevant for colonial and imperial studies; namely, firstly, whether, to what extent and in which forms a **common and unique** European culture exists and how this is related to other regional or non-European cultures, and, secondly, how Europe

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<sup>5</sup> Janny de Jong, Gé Prince and Hugo s’Jacob, *Niet-westerse geschiedenis: Benaderingen en thema’s* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). Wolf’s book pointed already at the importance of multidisciplinary in the field of non-western studies and at ways to include the histories of peoples and regions without written sources or only sources of outsiders.

<sup>7</sup> One example may serve as explanation: Eric Thompson, “Research and Regionalism in Southeast Asia,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 165.4 (2009): 612–22 reviews 5 recent publications on Southeast Asia and notes differences between American traditions of Area Studies in contrast to international and an intra-regional field of scholarship. See pages 613 and 614.

<sup>8</sup> See for an overview of these developments Janny de Jong, “World History: A Brief Introduction,” and “Globalisation as a Field of Study for Historians,” in *World and Global History: Research and Teaching*, eds. Seija Jalagin, Susanna Tavera and Andrew Dille (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2011), 1–11 and 13–24.



and how **cultural transformations** are perceived within Europe and from the outside.

In the Master programme *Euroculture*, the first question is the point of departure for courses that study various cultural and political traditions within Europe as well as global influences on these traditions. In colonial studies, as well as world and global history, this same question leads to studies about the influence of Europe (or the diverse European colonial powers) on other regions and countries, and the influence that the colonial relationship may have exerted on the policy, status, economy and culture of the metropolis. This may range from a more general view on the role of trade relations, to the particular form of colonial rule or the introduction of western knowledge and technologies. Also one might think of social studies that focus on familial ties and the importance of ruling families.<sup>9</sup> Of course it should also be noted that there were many sorts of colonial settlements: it matters whether the expansion abroad was meant to be temporary in tropical regions, as was the case in, for instance, the Netherlands Indies, or permanent, like the British and French settlements in North America or the Dutch and English settlements in South Africa.

The second question, “How is Europe and how are cultural transformations perceived within Europe and from the outside?” would in the field of colonial studies involve the inquiry into a broad range of very different influences. Migration of people from the former colonies to Europe after decolonisation, content and role of ethnographic museums as well as the changes in the way of presenting these materials, colonial institutions and libraries, influences on art and architecture, on food, music are just a selection of the wide range of influences. In the master programme, these same issues might be addressed but obviously that field is wider than just these influences alone.

Of course, an answer to the question how Europe is perceived abroad is not simple to give. Nobody will even think that the perception of the various countries in Europe, or the West for that matter, is the same in countries like Iraq, Kenya, China, Japan, Mexico, India or Indonesia. It goes without saying that the different political, social, economic, cultural and historical contexts need to be taken into account. The following example illustrates that the context indeed is very important. In the 1970s and 1980s, the so-called ‘world-system approach,’ especially elaborated by Immanuel Wallerstein, was popular as a Marxist-inspired general methodology to explain the history of the West (centre) and its relations with the Third World (periphery) with a semi-periphery in between.<sup>10</sup> Yet, this approach

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<sup>9</sup> Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005); Susan Legêne, *De Bagage van Blombhoff en Van Breugel: Japan, Java, Tripoli en Suriname in de Negentiende-Eeuwse Nederlandse Cultuur van het Imperialisme* (Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 1998); Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: Europeans and Eurasians in Colonial Indonesia*, 2nd ed. (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

never gained any foothold in Japan, because it did not address the central issue of the specific relations between Japan and the outside world. In other words, this world-system model supposedly was global, explaining the development of trade and commercial relations between various regions in the world, yet the point of departure was Eurocentric. Japanese historians obviously did not envisage their position as semi-periphery.

The idea of a semi-periphery as such seemed to marginalise people. World historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, for instance, writes in his book *Millennium*: “Part of the mission of this book is to rehabilitate the overlooked, including places often ignored as peripheral, peoples marginalized as inferior, and individuals relegated to bit-parts and footnotes.”<sup>11</sup> The East was not, and indeed has never been, simply a passive bystander – nor is this true for other parts of the world.

### **Eurocentrism and Power**

‘Europe’ is often more a metaphor than a specific geographical place. As the Indian historian, Dipesh Chakrabarty, wrote, it is a “hyperreal” Europe, even an imaginary space. The problem was that Europe remained the “sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories,” even if the topic was Chinese or Indian history. Chakrabarty pointed, for instance, to the fact that third-world historians referred to works in European history, but this did not work the other way round. It simply seemed impossible to avoid ‘Europe.’ What needed to be done, therefore, was to ‘provincialise’ Europe, in other words, to show that Europe and the West are simply one source of power and knowledge among others.<sup>12</sup>

Chakrabarty is associated with a group of academics, especially from South Asia, who practices what is loosely called subaltern studies. The idea behind it was to give a voice to the people ‘from below,’ whom in the former colonial and imperial studies had not received enough attention. These studies formed part of the broader field of postcolonialism theories and studies.<sup>13</sup>

One of the most famous writers in postcolonial studies is Edward Said, whose *Orientalism* (1978) focused on just how the contacts of Europe/the West were permeated by colonialism and imperialism and what this meant for Europe itself. Every European or American, Said stated, “comes up against the Orient as a Eu-

<sup>11</sup> Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Millennium* (London: Bantam Press, 1995), 8.

<sup>12</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and his “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Pasts?” in *Representations* 37, Special Issue: *Imperial Fantasies and Postcolonial Histories* (1992): 1. See also: C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 470; he is in favour of a decentralisation of world history.

<sup>13</sup> For an extensive overview see: Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001).

ropean or American first, as an individual second.”<sup>14</sup> Western scholarship on ‘the’ Orient was in his opinion inextricably tied to imperialist power.

Said paid no attention to the fact that there have been very different traditions in Orientalist scholarship; many so-called orientalists did not have any direct relationship to any imperial power and studied, for instance, Islam purely out of intellectual curiosity. But indeed anthropological knowledge, for example, often had served to back up political domination of non-western peoples; anthropologist Bernard S. Cohn, for instance, had demonstrated this earlier.<sup>15</sup>

Through more emphasis on the ‘culture of colonialism,’ literature, and social as well as intellectual matters, the focus lay less on aspects related to economy, international politics and military power, that once had dominated imperial studies. This was less the case in studies related to the concept of globalisation. Globalisation was, and is, often related to trading patterns and contacts. In an interesting overview of the field of global history, Patrick O’ Brien, a specialist in global economic history at the London School of Economics, described the task for global historians as follows: “to craft new, more inclusive and persuasive general narratives that might hold together without the fishy glue of Eurocentrism.”<sup>16</sup>

There are historians who have moved from colonial/imperial or area studies to world or global history. One might mention the names of Christopher Bayly and Jürgen Osterhammel here.<sup>17</sup> Taking a long-time perspective, such as is customary in world history, makes colonial empires only one *form* of empires that have existed in time. Historians Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, one specialised in Russian history, the other a specialist on African history, for instance, maintain that the focus on Europe and the West as “uniquely powerful agents of change” is misleading. For empires, the key question was how to maintain control over large geographical spaces. Various strategies (“repertoires”) were used to achieve that end. Burbank and Cooper also put forward that the legacy of empires still is visible in the contemporary world: though China, Russia and the United States do not usually refer to imperial images, “imperial pathways made them what they are.”<sup>18</sup>

And then, interest revived as well in new forms of colonial and imperial studies. In other words, metropolitan history, politics and culture became once again the point for departure.

<sup>14</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 5 and 11.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>16</sup> Patrick O’Brien, “Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History,” *Journal of Global History* 1.1 (2006): 33.

<sup>17</sup> C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004); Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, 5th rev. ed. (München: Beck, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 21.

### Empire at Home: Eurocentrism as a Stimulus for Research

New studies that focus on metropolitan culture and politics have come to the fore. Of course, the history of colonialism and imperialism is researched differently than during the period of colonialism itself, for instance by taking into account the “chaotic pluralism” of interests at home and allies and agents. The Empire Project that British historian John Darwin started shows that the history of the British Empire should be seen as a combination of various linkages of imperial politics.<sup>19</sup>

The new research stresses the impact of the Empire ‘at home.’ This has been called the *New Imperial History* in Great Britain. These studies show, for instance, how culture, identity and modernity were shaped in relation to the Empire (Kathleen Wilson), what role propaganda, popular culture and museums played (John MacKenzie), what influence empire had on readers and politics, on constructions of class, sexuality, citizenship and how it was narrated in histories (Catherine Hall).<sup>20</sup> It had long been customary to think that the Empire had not had a major impact on the domestic history. These studies argued against that perception. In his study on the ideological origins of the British Empire, David Armitage shows how long the pedigree of the neglect of empire actually was in British domestic history. External contacts usually had been treated separately from the internal history of Britain, in spite of the strong connection between the two.<sup>21</sup> The history of colonial and imperial contacts may not always be a pleasant subject, but it is a very important one to address. Colonial amnesia leads to a distorted view on history.

The fact that only British studies in this field are mentioned above does not mean that these are limited to Great Britain only. In various countries, for instance, research has been done on colonial monuments and colonial heritage.<sup>22</sup> Issues referring to cultural heritage, museums, the role of media, lobby groups, the imagining of empire, the role of political organisations, political ideology etc. are all of high relevance for a proper understanding of contemporary Europe. As are social issues related to migration, immigration from former colonies and attitudes to-

<sup>19</sup> John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11-7.

<sup>20</sup> Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Culture and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); John M. MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 12-23.

<sup>22</sup> See in particular Robert Aldrich, *Vestiges of the Colonial Empire in France: Monuments, Museums and Colonial Memories*. (Gordonville, VA, USA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) and his review of French historiography on colonialism “Imperial *Mise en Valeur* and *Mise en Scène*: Recent Works on French Colonialism.” *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 04 (2002): 917-36.

wards the multicultural society. Therefore the study of colonial empires and their consequences both in the world at large and 'at home' certainly is not the deadest of dead fields. It is a vibrant, important and challenging speciality.

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# Contesting Cultural Memory

## Rethinking Postcolonial Identities in Europe

Margriet van der Waal

### Introduction

Every year around the end of November, a sense of *déjà vu* approaches me, when a seemingly recurring event announces itself: the annual, ‘national,’ albeit marginal debate on the alleged racism of the figure of ‘Zwarte Piet’ (Black Pete) in the Dutch ‘Sinterklaas’ celebrations.<sup>1</sup> In 2011, the debate promoted to a slightly more centre-stage location after the rather violent arrest of two demonstrators at the annual arrival of Sinterklaas, because they refused to remove t-shirts displaying the text, “Zwarte Piet is racism.”<sup>2</sup> The two arrested protestors, Quinsy Gario, a performance poet, and Kno'ledge Cesare, a hiphop MC, were in fact carrying out an art project with the intention to stimulate a public debate about racism and the figure of Zwarte Piet in the Netherlands. This debate, on Zwarte Piet, racism, and Dutch colonial history including slavery, usually fizzles away a few days after December 5<sup>th</sup>, as it did also this time.

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<sup>1</sup> The celebration of Sinterklaas is a national children’s festival, more or less an invented tradition created by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Celebrated annually on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, Sinterklaas is a form of national theatre that stages the arrival of a good-natured old man sporting an impressive beard and red mitre, a white horse, and a handful of black, fumbling and foolish ‘helpers,’ all called Zwarte Piet. For a historical overview, see Frits Booy, *Op Zoek naar Zwarte Piet: Een Speurtocht naar de Herkomst, de Ontwikkeling en de Betekenis van de Dienaar van Sinterklaas*, 2nd ed. (Eindhoven: Stichting Nationaal Sint Nicolaas Comité, 2008); Eugenie Boer and J. I. A. Helsloot, *Het Sinterklaas Boek* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2009). For a more critical consideration of this tradition, see Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Allison Blakely, *Blacks in the Dutch World: The Evolution of Racial Imagery in a Modern Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> “Zwarte Piet is racism.” Amateur visual images of the arrest were posted on the internet site YouTube, see “Schokkend Arrestaties Intocht Sinterklaas Dordrecht !!!! Amateur Beelden,” YouTube video, 3:05, amateur video taken on 12 November 2011, posted by “justlikethischannel,” 12 November 2011, <http://youtu.be/8Qp6yUIPUTY> (accessed 1 March 2012). Only after tweets about the video footage on YouTube were posted, did the Dutch news media start reporting on the incident. See Karlijn Van Houwelingen, “T-shirt met Zwarte Piet is Racisme Verboden bij Intocht,” *Algemeen Dagblad*, 14 November 2011; Hans Beerekamp, “Demonstreren tegen Zwarte Piet is Gevaarlijk,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 14 November 2011. For international commentary, see Jessica Olien, “In Holland, Santa Doesn’t Have Elves: He Has Slaves,” *Slate*, 1 December 2011, [http://www.slate.com/articles/life/holidays/2011/12/zwarte\\_piet\\_holland\\_s\\_favorite\\_racist\\_christmas\\_tradition\\_.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/life/holidays/2011/12/zwarte_piet_holland_s_favorite_racist_christmas_tradition_.html).

However, there seems to be a recent shift in the discourse about perceived racism in the Dutch public debate which puts this ‘Zwarte Piet’ protest in a rather different light. An important impetus for this shift was the publication of the novel *Alleen Maar Nette Mensen* (*Only Decent People*)<sup>3</sup>, published in 2008. Both, the novel and the Zwarte Piet incident, reveal how current-day European identities are informed by historical narratives of a traumatic past, for instance colonialism and slavery.

Although it might seem obvious enough to keep the colonial past of many European countries in mind when considering how European cultural identities are formed and understood, it seems that when European identity formation is considered, one might just as well speak of “the most canonized frame of reference”<sup>4</sup>, which *only* entails the “internecine rivalries among European countries, the role of the United States, and the bi-polar division of the world order embodied in the Cold War.”<sup>5</sup> A postcolonial Europe project, however, seeks to move beyond this canonised frame of references to consider the current heterogeneous complexity of migration and post-colonialism within the European context and its resultant inequalities beyond the conventional “residual figures” to newly emerging identities.<sup>6</sup> Such a project demands closer scrutiny of how socio-cultural subject positions are formulated and articulated in the light of the commemoration of problematic and painful pasts.

In this article, a reworked and updated version of the paper given at the Euroculture conference in 2010, I would like to consider this discourse on past trauma (colonialism and slavery) within current-day, postcolonial Europe as a particular and important facet of research into the cultural dimensions of European integration.

### The Case of *Alleen Maar Nette Mensen*

In an exhilarating form of modern-day Dutch, author Robert Vuijsje tells the coming-of-age story of David, an identify-confused young Jew from Amsterdam’s fashionable Old South quarter, who is constantly mistaken for being Moroccan. He is in search of the love of his dreams, a shapely black woman. Frequently sojourning between the richest and poorest parts of Amsterdam, David’s adventures take him from Amsterdam’s posh Old South quarter to the Bijlmermeer, a region of derelict high-rise flats populated by migrants from various parts of the global south and

<sup>3</sup> Robert Vuijsje, *Alleen Maar Nette Mensen* (Amsterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Peo Hansen, “European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 5.4 (2002): 483.

<sup>5</sup> Gurinder K. Bhambra, “Postcolonial Europe, or Understanding Europe in Times of the Post-colonial,” in *The Sage Handbook of European Studies*, ed. Chris Rumford (London: Sage, 2009), 69-70.

<sup>6</sup> Graham Huggan, “Perspectives on Postcolonial Europe,” *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 44.3 (2008): 241-9.



remembered in cultural memory as the site of an El Al airplane crash in 1992. Described elsewhere as “once a vibrant upper-middle class community,” it had fallen into a state of dereliction by the late 1990s and boasts “the highest unemployment and crime rates in the country.”<sup>7</sup> The area was home to some of the city’s poorest and most marginal citizens until recent urban renovation projects were quite successfully started. It is here, in the Bijlmer (short for Bijlmermeer), with its significant population of migrants from former Dutch colonies (especially from Surinam and the Dutch Antilles), that David hopes to find the elusive, but much desired “Sherida chain who is also an intellectual.”<sup>8</sup> Dumped finally by both his Surinamese girlfriend Rowanda and his former girlfriend from school (Naomi, from a similar ‘proper’ background as himself), and disillusioned with Dutch middle-class culture, David meets Naima, a Moroccan cashier from the local supermarket. She is not an “illiterate cave-dweller from the mountains, her family came from Casablanca”<sup>9</sup>, and the novel ends with the promise of a new relationship between the two.

Even though the novel was already in its 25<sup>th</sup> print run less than two years after its publication, the first months of the novel’s published life were rather uneventful. A heated public debate on whether or not the book is racist and sexist, however, ensued when it was nominated for a Dutch literary award (the Libris literatuurprijs). This discussion was stirred further when the novel won an equally prestigious Flemish literary prize (the “Gouden Uil”). The jury report on this text – with its short chapters, sms language, and staccato style – added fuel to the fire with its description of the text written in “Dutch that swings like an African boob, a rhythm that fits more tightly than a black ass in too small a tiger print legging [...]”<sup>10</sup> When these accusations of sexism, racism, colonial attitude and such were pronounced against Vuijsje, he responded with a reaction typical within the literary field: it is not Vuijsje, the author, who should be held responsible for the pronouncements in the novels, because it’s the character David (despite obvious auto-

<sup>7</sup> Georgina Y. Stal and Daniyal M. Zuberi, “Ending the Cycle of Poverty through Socio-Economic Integration: A Comparison of Moving to Opportunity (MTO) in the United States and the Bijlmermeer Revival Project in the Netherlands,” *Cities* 27.1 (2010): 5.

<sup>8</sup> “Sherida chain” is David’s metonymic description for a black woman who wears a golden chain with a pendant with the name of the wearer in golden, curly letters. Sherida, according to David, is a woman who has been living her whole life in the Netherlands, but whose existence is located entirely outside of Dutch society. See: Vuijsje, *Alleen Maar Nette Mensen*, 36-7. This familiarity with Dutch society but lack of participation in it is considered a desirable feature by David, who spurns the mediocre, middle-class qualities of “Dutch society.” Whether this lack of participation is the result of agency or of structure is a problematic issue not considered by David. The “Sherida chain” refers to a name necklace, with “Sherida” being a popular, female Suriname name. This kind of jewellery was initially worn within hip hop circles, but became more mainstream after being worn by Carrie Bradshaw in the TV series, *Sex and the City*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>10</sup> Guy Mortier, “Gouden Uil 2009,” *Leesplein.nl*, <http://www.leesplein.nl/assets/juryrapporten/uil-volv-2009.html> (accessed 9 March 2012).

biographical links between David and Vuijsje that have been pointed out by the author himself) who takes this position.<sup>11</sup>

### Contesting Cultural Memory

Although restricted here to offer neither a detailed close-reading of the novel nor closer scrutiny of the public reactions to the novel's publication, I would like to consider how the novel brings not only the historical moment of colonialism and slavery into focus, but also that other European trauma: the Holocaust. This enables me to reflect on how cultural memory could be used to critically consider the process of defining postcolonial, European cultural identity.

David, an avid diarist, offers – without any motivation for penning down these thoughts – some observations on the Dutch “multicultural society”:

“Blacks think about slavery every day. Except for blacks, no one ever thinks about slavery.  
Jews think about the Second World War every day. Except for Jews, no one thinks about the Second World War.”<sup>12</sup>

A short while later, when David visits the home of his Surinam girlfriend, Rowanda, for the first time, he engages in a discussion of some sort about slavery and his own Jewishness with Rowanda's mother, Janine. The mother argues that the Dutch owe the Afro-Surinamese community costs of repair for slavery, because Jews were paid such costs after the war. During dinner, David then poses the following two “hypothetical” questions to Rowanda:

‘What is worse? That your parents were slaves or being born in Africa.’ She said that I should not nag. I (David) posed another hypothetical question. ‘What is worse? Massacring a whole race, or trading part of a race?’ Now Janine did hear it. She cried: ‘Slavery was actually much worse than the war with the Jewish people.’ She hit with her hand against the blue tiles. ‘We were also massacred. And raped. Otherwise there would not be any half-bloods.’<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Elsbeth Etty, “‘Schrijvers Durven het Publieke Debat niet Aan,’” *NRC Handelsblad*, 3 July 2009. See also: Thomas Vaessens, *De Revanche van de Roman: Literatuur, Autoriteit en Engagement* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Vuijsje, *Alleen Maar Nette Mensen*, 10. At the time of writing this contribution, the novel has not yet been translated into English nor has the rights been sold to an English publisher, because the book is found to be “too controversial” (according to a telephone conversation with the author's literary agent on 12 March 2012). Translations are my own.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

The reader is here confronted with rethinking how histories of trauma and victimisation are understood within different communities and how such histories interconnect with each other – not only in the past, but also and crucially, I might add, in the present within the context of memory culture. The danger implied in the quotation from *Only Decent People* is a memory culture delineated along ethnic lines, and within current-day European context the problems entailed with ethnicity-based processes of identification and identity construction need not be expounded.

Michael Rothberg, in *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), addresses this dilemma of seemingly competing memory cultures by turning specifically to Holocaust and slavery memory and asking what happens when “different histories confront each other in the public sphere?”<sup>14</sup> As Rothberg explains, there are a number of possible ways of dealing with the phenomenon when “social actors bring multiple traumatic pasts into a heterogeneous and changing post-World War II present.”<sup>15</sup> One option is that the interaction of different memories in contemporary multicultural society stimulates a competition of victimhood, where one memory, the ‘dominant’ one, comes to replace the other, competing memories. The other option, suggests Rothberg, is that of “resonance.” This “resonance” approach entails that instead of pitting memory as “a zero-sum struggle over scarce resources,” memory is to be considered as “multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing.”<sup>16</sup> Memory culture as site of identification, argues Rothberg, need to be considered in terms of “elements of alterity and forms of commonality with others.”<sup>17</sup>

It is exactly this lack of envisioning alterity *and* commonality with others that *Only Decent People* addresses. In a newspaper interview, Vuijsje summed up the culture of victimisation in the Netherlands as follows:

The Surinamese cry out how terrible it is that they once were slaves. Moroccans bemoan the fact that they cannot find internships. Then I say, we Jews were killed. I find it ridiculous, this bidding against each other, but I think that I understand the tendency toward victimhood among minorities better than a regular blond Dutch person.<sup>18</sup>

The seeming inability of a “regular blond Dutch person” to understand the perceived victimhood among minorities as more than simply knee-jerk reactions of political correctness display itself remarkably in the public discussion around

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>18</sup> Elsbeth Eddy, “Zwart, Sexy en Gevuld,” *NRC Next*, 5 January 2010. Translation my own.

‘Zwarte Piet’ specifically and the treatment of Dutch colonial history encompassing slavery more generally.<sup>19</sup> Referring to a recently broadcast TV series on slavery, where a white presenter explained slavery’s history to a black actor and comedian, who then embarks on a search for his roots, economist and historian Sandew Hira compares this specific representation of slavery’s history “as if the Germans would tell the Jews what the Holocaust was and that it was not so bad.”<sup>20</sup> On the Internet, various comments can be found on forums linking the Sinterklaas tradition and Holocaust memories. Two online examples will suffice. Example one compares the Sinterklaas festival, and by extension slavery, to the Holocaust:

Slavery is for black people what the Holocaust is for the Jews. Imagine that the Jewish community would be reminded of the horrible past because of an age-old tradition. Would we accept that? Slavery is not less serious because it happened longer ago. It is crazy that a children’s festival (i.e. Sinterklaas) is characterised by a very flat representation of our dark past.<sup>21</sup>

Example two considers the lack of a critical public debate on slavery in comparison to the taboo on Holocaust denial: “During our colonial past a large group of ‘minorities’ were also treated inhumanely and killed but about that you may say/find/disagree/deny anything. Why is that different from the Holocaust?”<sup>22</sup>

Although these remarks clearly reflect the typical “forum logic” of many Internet commentary, lacking nuance and complexity, their mere utterance suggests the semiotic necessity to investigate the articulation of memory and the representation of an array of traumatic events (the Holocaust, slavery, colonial legacies, genocide) through complex sign systems that have in their essence no meaning themselves, but obtain meaning as a result of the context(s) in which they are read.

## Conclusion

A project on the relation between cultural memory and constructions of cultural identity within current-day Europe is the kind of endeavour that fits the bill of the Euroculture programme well. In fact, a Euroculture student recently undertook

<sup>19</sup> See for example: Chris van der Heijden, “De Zwarte Canon,” *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 7 March 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Sandew Hira, *De Slavernij: Het Witwassen van Een Zwarte Bladzijde uit de Nederlandse Geschiedenis* (Den Haag: International Institute for Scientific Research, 2011), 5.

<sup>21</sup> Wolf, “Zwarte Piet: Racistisch of Niet?,” *Debat Op 2*, 2 December 2011, <http://debatop2.ncrv.nl/nieuwsblogs/zaterdag-zwarte-piet-racistisch-of-niet> (accessed 1 March 2012). Translation my own.

<sup>22</sup> Triple S, “Die Leip Net by Powned +ontkennen Holocaust,” *Forum.Fok.nl*, 24 November 2011, <http://forum.fok.nl/topic/1742693> (accessed 1 March 2012). Translation my own.

just such a kind of research programme, which resulted in a thesis on the topic of how second and third generations of Turkish migrants in Germany perceive the Holocaust.<sup>23</sup> Her research, an empirical sociological investigation, resonates well with the kind of questions one may pose to works of art, such as Vuijsje's novel. Both projects pick up on circulating sentiments regarding cultural memories in a postcolonial European context, untangling the discourse on racism, trauma, and memory that constitute conceptions of European identity.

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<sup>23</sup> Katherina Nolte, "What do they know? The German Turks and Their Perception of the Holocaust," unpublished MA thesis, submitted at the University of Groningen and Jagiellonian University in Krakow, 2012. See in this regard also the work by Yasemin Yıldız, for example "Governing European Subjects: Tolerance and Guilt in the Discourse of 'Muslim Women,'" *Cultural Critique* 77.1 (2011): 70-101.

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# Entering the Third Dimension

## A CMM (Coordinated Management of Meaning) Analysis of Transculturalism in Inter/Action

Elizabeth M. Goering

### Introduction

This story begins on a Sunday morning. I am listening to a radio interview with Vincent Harding, a key figure in the American civil rights movement. A bit later in this article, it will become obvious why I'm choosing to share my experience with you in narrative form, but for now I would ask you to just listen to my story. I had just received the call for papers for the conference where this article was to be presented, so in the back of my mind, I was thinking about the theme for the Euroculture Intensive Programme, "Europe: Space for Transcultural Existence?" with that troubling question mark at the end, as well as the topic for this conference, "Gauging European Transcultural Dimensions." I have to admit that I had been perplexed by Angela Merkel's death knell for multiculturalism and her claim that "multiculturalism has utterly failed"<sup>1</sup>, a verdict that since has been reasserted by the Prime Minister of Britain<sup>2</sup> and the President of France<sup>3</sup>. So on this Sunday morning, I am lying in bed, listening to this interview, and here on the radio is Vincent Harding asking similarly disquieting questions about the multicultural "experiment" of America. "Is America even possible?" he asks.<sup>4</sup> And in his answer, he evokes a stanza from a poem by the American poet Langston Hughes: "O, let

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<sup>1</sup> Kate Connolly, "Angela Merkel Declares Death of German Multiculturalism," *The Guardian*, 17 October 2010, Main section.

<sup>2</sup> "British PM: Multiculturalism Has Failed – David Cameron's Remarks on West's Policy Draw Fire from Muslim Community," msnbc.com, last modified 6 February 2011, [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41444364/ns/world\\_news-europe/t/british-pm-multiculturalism-has-failed/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41444364/ns/world_news-europe/t/british-pm-multiculturalism-has-failed/).

<sup>3</sup> "France's Sarkozy: Multiculturalism Has Failed," CBNNews.com, last modified 11 February 2011, <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2011/February/Frances-Sarkozy-Multiculturalism-Has-Failed/>.

<sup>4</sup> Vincent Harding and Krista Tippett. *Civility, History, and Hope – On Being Podcast*, 51 min, 9 sec.; *On Being*, MP3, [http://www.publicradio.org/tools/media\\_player/popup.php?name=being/programs/2011/02/23/20110224\\_civility\\_history\\_hope\\_128](http://www.publicradio.org/tools/media_player/popup.php?name=being/programs/2011/02/23/20110224_civility_history_hope_128).

America be America again—The land that never has been yet—”<sup>5</sup> It is almost enough to make those of us who would like to believe in the possibility of spaces for transcultural existence throw up our hands in despair.

But, I am optimistic enough to still believe – in spite of the sceptics – that transcultural spaces are, indeed, possible. I am also realistic enough to know that they are very difficult to achieve and likely can only be spotted in fleeting moments. Also, given my own disciplinary background in the field of communication studies, I am convinced that if transcultural spaces are possible, they must be constructed through interaction, through our talk. That led me to this research project, in which I am exploring the following research question: How are transcultural spaces communicatively constructed?

To answer this question, I needed to identify moments where one might glimpse efforts to create transcultural spaces, and I found the artefacts for my analysis in film. Movies are a logical choice for this analysis because, as some scholars suggest, they are “*equipments for living*.”<sup>6</sup> Brummett explains this notion, suggesting that movies “do not merely pose problems, they suggest ways and means to resolve the problems insofar as they follow discursively a pattern that people might follow in reality.”<sup>7</sup> In this paper, I will analyze one particular film, *The Class*, a French movie released in 2008 under the original title *Entre les Murs*. This movie captures in near documentary style the interaction in a culturally diverse classroom in a “tough Parisian neighbourhood.”<sup>8</sup> By focusing on this one film, I am hoping to demonstrate transculturalism in action or, perhaps more accurately, in *interaction* and to identify some of the discursive patterns that may equip us for living in a culturally diverse world. But first, I want to introduce you to the theoretical perspective that informs my work: Coordinated Management of Meaning.

### Coordinated Management of Meaning

Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) is a communication theory first introduced by W. Barnett Pearce and Vernon E. Cronen in the 1970s.<sup>9</sup> The perspective is almost more of a worldview and a set of tools than a well-formulated theory. One of the foundational assumptions made by CMM is that communication is constitutive. In other words, we create and give meaning to the world in

<sup>5</sup> Langston Hughes, “Let America Be America Again,” in *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 189.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Dine Young, “Movies as Equipment for Living: A Developmental Analysis of the Importance of Film in Everyday Life,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17.4 (2000): 448.

<sup>7</sup> Barry Brummett, “Burke’s Representative Anecdote as a Method in Media Criticism,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 1 (1984): 164.

<sup>8</sup> *The Class (Entre les Murs)*, DVD, directed by Laurent Cantet (2008; Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> W. Barnett Pearce and Vernon E. Cronen, *Communication, Action, and Meaning: The Creation of Social Realities* (New York: Praeger, 1980).



which we live through our interaction. As Barnett Pearce puts it, “[w]e consist of a cluster of social conversations, and [...] patterns of communication constitute the world as we know it.”<sup>10</sup> A second key assumption of this perspective is that communication episodes, or “clusters of social conversation,” are the central processes whereby we humans co-create our social worlds. Furthermore, the theory recognizes that communication episodes are patterned. In other words, the “reality” that is constituted through our interaction is not random; rather it is constructed through patterned sequences of interaction. Sometimes the constructed reality is desirable, but often we get stuck in unwanted repetitive patterns, or URPs.<sup>11</sup>

By analyzing communication patterns, we can ‘see’ the world we are co-creating. With its emphasis on the constitutive function of communication, CMM invites us to ask: “What are we making together? What do we want to make together in the future?” CMM is interested in how communication “calls into being ‘better’ social worlds.”<sup>12</sup> If we are stuck in URPs, CMM invites us to reconstitute our world. If multiculturalism has “utterly failed,” CMM invites us to analyze the communication patterns that have constituted that ‘failure’ and imagine ways to reconstitute our reality.

### The Communicative Constitution of Transcultural Spaces

In his contribution to this collection of articles, Martin Tamcke suggests that transcultural communication is possible if we recognize that “I am not you, as you are not me. Yet I am not just separated from you, as you are not just separated from me. There is something of you in me, as there is something of me in you. Therefore, when we have to interact, I deal with you in me, as you deal with me in you for a better understanding of each other, as a value in itself.” So let us examine the communication patterns in the culturally diverse space of *The Class* and see whether they succeed in creating a space for transcultural communication.

#### *A Pattern is Born*

The movie begins at the start of another school year in a diverse high school in a rough Parisian neighbourhood. In the first scene we will analyze, the teacher, François Marin, is calling his students to order by tapping on his desk and urging the students to “Calm down now!” Mr. Marin begins to establish some ground

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<sup>10</sup> W. Barnett Pearce, *Communication and the Human Condition* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 11.

<sup>11</sup> Vernon E. Cronen, W. Barnett Pearce and Lonna Snavey, “A Theory of Rule-structure and Types of Episodes and a Study of Perceived Enmeshment in Undesired Repetitive Patterns (URPs),” in *Communication Yearbook* 3, edited by Dan Nimmo (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1979).

<sup>12</sup> J. Kevin Barge and W. Barnett Pearce, “A Reconnaissance of CMM Research,” *Human Systems* 15.1 (2004): 16.

rules for the class, stating “Remove your hood, please” and “Stop stirring things up.” These reminders are followed by a lecture on how much time the students will waste over the course of the school year if they take 15 minutes to settle down each day. “We lose thousands of minutes,” he argues. The teacher then proceeds to compare this class to other schools that “do the full hour.” “Imagine how far ahead they get in a year,” he observes. The students’ response is to challenge the teacher, pointing out: “We never do an hour. You always say that. Teachers say we do an hour’s class, but we never do. [...] 8:30-9:25 doesn’t make an hour. Stop saying other schools do an hour. They don’t.”

In this opening episode, the students and their teacher begin establishing communication patterns that constitute the day-to-day experience in this classroom. The teacher acknowledges that the student is right about the hour not being a full 60 minutes. After admitting that the students are right (“All right, it’s 55 minutes. That’s an important point. All I’m saying is that we waste time. Like now.”), Mr. Marin seeks to redirect the conversation by asking students to “take out a sheet of paper” and make name plates for themselves. However, the pattern established in the initial interaction is repeated as one student immediately challenges the teacher: “Why write our names? [...] You know us. We had you last year.” The teacher calmly and logically explains: “Esmerelda, half the kids here are new. Be happy. That way people will know your name.” Esmerelda, however, does not back down and refuses to follow the teacher’s directive: “I’m not doing it. I won’t if you won’t.” In the end, the teacher gives in, acknowledging: “You’re right. For those of you who don’t know me, I’m Mr. Marin.”

In this scene, it is easy to see the origins of communication patterns that are counterproductive to transcultural communication. One glaring pattern is particularly apparent in this classroom. It begins with the teacher issuing a directive, which is immediately followed by a student challenging the teacher’s power. The teacher calmly, but often in a patronizing tone, explains his request or rule, generally admitting the legitimacy of part of the student’s claim. In the end, the students reluctantly accept his explanation – until the pattern repeats itself on another issue. We see this pattern emerge right from the start, and throughout the film, the students challenge the teacher on nearly everything from simple requests to word choices to whether he can require them to read in class. This pattern is quickly becoming an unwanted repetitive pattern – a URP.

### *A Reified URP*

While the first scene allows us to see the birth of an unwanted repetitive pattern, this next scene illustrates that this URP has, indeed, become reified within this group. Furthermore, we see that the communication pattern has implications for identity and for the possibility of creating a transcultural space within this classroom.

In this clip, Mr. Marin is trying to explain the meaning of the word “succulent.” He writes the sentence “Bill enjoys a succulent cheeseburger” on the board, and the immediate response from one of the students, in keeping with the pattern described above, is “Cheeseburgers stink.” After a brief discussion about the relative merits of cheeseburgers, another student proffers another challenge: “What’s with the Bills.... The name Bill. You always use weird names.... Why don’t you use Aïssata or Rachid or Ahmed or...?” Another student chimes in: “You always use whitey names.” Consistent with the pattern that has become institutionalized within this group, the teacher seeks to logically explain his position. First he notes that Bill is not such a weird name; after all: “A recent U.S. President was called Bill.” Then he takes on the challenge about his choice of “whitey names,” arguing: “Khoumba, if I start choosing names to suit all your origins, it’ll never end.” In the end, he backs down, asking: “What do you suggest?”

At this point, the class seems to be so trapped in this unwanted repetitive communication cycle that one wonders if learning can take place at all. Furthermore, the cosmopolitan, transcultural space one might have hoped could be created in this richly diverse classroom seems increasingly illusory.

Remember, though, that one of the fundamental assumptions of CMM is that humans co-create their social worlds. That means that if we are co-constructing undesirable “realities,” we can re-construct them. But how? How do we break out of URPs?

To help us answer that question, let me introduce you to another important concept in CMM: CMM assumes that communication consists of practices and resources.<sup>13</sup> Practices are behaviours, what we do, and resources are the materials, such as language skills, personality traits, or technology, that inform practice. Practice and resources are essentially reflexive building blocks. We act in ways that our resources allow. And research shows that we tend to continue acting in repetitive cycles until resources are “put at risk.” To break out of URPs, we must put resources at risk. One way to do that is through “restorying,” and to understand that, I need to explain the role of stories in coordinating meaning.

We shape meaning through the intermingling of “stories lived” and “stories told.”<sup>14</sup> As we enter any new experience, we do so with expectations that are shaped by the stories that have been told to us by others about the experience and by our own lived stories. We interpret the “stories told” through frames constructed by our “stories lived,” and as we live the experience, new stories will be told to us, new stories will be lived, and meanings will emerge from the blending of those stories. In seamless iteration, stories told are processed through stories lived, and meaning is constructed and reconstructed.

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<sup>13</sup> Pearce, *Communication and the Human Condition*, 23.

<sup>14</sup> W. Barnett Pearce, “Some Personal Reflections,” *Human Systems* 15.3 (2004): 206.

Indeed, stories have a great deal of power when it comes to the management of meaning! In particular, they have the power to disrupt unwanted repetitive patterns. Transcendent storytelling can be used to create “fertile turbulence” that can give interactants a chance to “rewrite” their story.<sup>15</sup>

### *Reconstituting Social Worlds through Restorying*

In *The Class*, Mr. Marin assigns each student to write and tell his/her “self-portrait,” or story. In this next clip, Esmeralda, a student who has played a key role in constituting the URPs that are the communicative reality of this group, shares her story: “My name is Esmeralda Ouertani. I’m 14. I live on Allée du Père Dhuit Paris 20 with my two parents and my three brothers and sisters. Later, I’d like to be a policewoman because people say all policemen are bad and so we need good ones. If not, I’d like to be a rapper.”

The next student to share his story is Wei, a 15-year-old Chinese immigrant. Wei discloses: “My hobby is playing video games, at least four hours a day. I find it hard using French correctly. It’s so hard expressing myself that others don’t understand me. That’s why I don’t communicate much. I hardly ever go out. Nothing much interests me outside. The environment doesn’t suit me here since I’m allergic but I don’t know to what.”

Of course, sharing stories involves risk. Rabah, the next student Mr. Marin calls on to share his self-portrait, is hesitant to read his story, but he does: “My name’s Rabah. I’m 14. I listen to rap. I love my village in Kabylia and go there every year. [...] I have two brothers but I don’t like school. I don’t like tramps. I like Zidane. I like to talk and I like Psy 4 de la Rime’s videos.”

Now, do not get me wrong. Sharing stories is not a panacea that magically reconstitutes undesirable communication patterns. In fact, one student responds dismissively to Wei’s story: “Allergic to yourself, that’s what.” But stories do plant the seeds that allow social worlds to be reconstituted as the participants in an interaction get to know one another better. By sharing their stories, the students open the possibility of transcultural connection.

### *Glimpses of Transcultural Communication*

Later in the film, the students meet in the computer room to finish up their stories, and it is at this point that we catch a glimpse of successful transcultural communication. One student, Souleymane, has chosen to tell his story through photos, and the teacher suggests he add legends to his photos. Mr. Marin asks: “What could

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<sup>15</sup> W. Barnett Pearce and Kimberly A. Pearce, “Transcendent Storytelling: Abilities for Systemic Practitioners and Their Clients,” *Human Systems* 9.3-4 (1998): 167-85. For an intriguing analysis of transcendent storytelling, see Liliana Castañeda Rossmann, “Remembering the Alamo: Cosmopolitan Communication and Grammars of Transcendence,” *Human Systems* 15.1 (2004): 33-44.

you put? Who is she?” “My mother,” the student replies. “You could say she’s your mother. Then you could explain why she’s making this gesture to the photographer,” suggests the teacher. The student explains: “They’d pissed her off. [...] She hates photos.” The teacher recommends: “So write that. My mother hates having her photo taken. That’s a legend. Understand? Do that with all the photos and you’re set.”

When Souleymane is finished, the teacher posts the photos for all to see: “If you’ve finished, come and take a look at Souleymane’s masterpiece.” As the students look at the pictures, there is no doubt that they have “found the you in me and the me in you” that makes transcultural spaces possible.

## Conclusion

So what lessons can we learn about creating transcultural spaces from this analysis? First, this analysis suggests that it is possible to create spaces for transcultural communication, at least fleetingly, if we are willing to put resources at risk and “create fertile turbulence” through the exchange of personal stories. Furthermore, to create transcultural spaces through the exchange of stories, we need to be thoughtful about interpreting lived stories, telling our own stories, and listening to stories told by others. The movie also highlights the importance of creating a climate in which people feel comfortable sharing their stories. Finally, this analysis reveals that the creation of transcultural spaces is episodic. It is not that an unwanted repetitive pattern is fixed one time and all is well. In fact, in this film, the class falls back into its URPs, culminating in an episode where a student is injured, and Souleymane, the student responsible, is called to a hearing where he will likely be expelled. But, for a fleeting moment, this class was able to create a space that facilitated transcultural communication. Our challenge is to identify the communication patterns that made that possible and recreate them in our own inter/actions.

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## **Part Three**

### **Towards a Transcultural Europe?**





# On the Path to Transculturality

Martin Tamcke

## Introduction

Whenever a student in my department enters the academic field of intercultural or interreligious coexistence or interaction, she or he will come across a text I wrote some years ago. While in intercultural interaction, this phrase should be present in the discussions of my students:

I am not you,  
as you are not me.  
Yet I am not just separated from you,  
as you are not just separated from me.  
There is something of you in me,  
as there is something of me in you.  
Therefore,  
when we have to interact,  
I deal with you in me,  
as you deal with me in you  
for a better understanding of each other,  
as a value in itself.

Interactions between cultures and religions always go this way, and there is always both: On the one hand, it can lead to a deeper understanding; on the other hand, when restricted or stopped at an early stage, it can lead to tensions. But everything that has happened in this interaction is present – all the time in both directions, and often somewhere in between. But where I find you in me and where you find me in you, there is the starting point of a next step on the path from intercultural interaction to transcultural existence.

## A Historical Example

In 1909, the German missionary Detwig von Oertzen met two Muslims, “two older Mohammedan spiritual figures,” who had “wrapped the green scarf of the

Prophet's offspring round their long kaftan.”<sup>1</sup> Von Oertzen briefly outlines the course of the conversation and mentions “that the two were brothers.” They had, he said, already identified themselves as “followers of Christ.” The elder used “to be for a long time the leader of a Mohammedan dervish monastery,” whereas the younger was “a very well educated expert on Islam, a so-called Müderri,” a title equivalent to that of “Doctor of Theology,” as von Oertzen explains to his readers. Von Oertzen's report goes as follows: While studying the Islamic writings opposing Christianity, they both got to study the Bible, became visibly convinced of the biblical truth and confessed it publicly. In order to be won back for Islam, they were sent to Arabia. But the attempt failed. At their return, their belief was even stronger, and so they had to flee. They sought protection in Bulgaria. But the Bulgarian government agreed to give them protection only if they would enter a Bulgarian orthodox monastery. Considering the local Muslims, the government could not help them further.<sup>2</sup> But since they intended to work in society, withdrawing in a monastery was out of the question. Von Oertzen's concluding judgement illustrates his point of view: “To our opinion, they were completely convinced in their minds of the truth contained in the Holy Scripture and the Christian message; but I could not tell to what extent their hearts are now revived.”

Another missionary describes them on 23 March 1909, in a publication in Germany, as “Mullahs from Macedonia who, after intense research, got to acknowledge the truth of the Gospel.”<sup>3</sup> What a pity! This is closer to the reality, at least regarding the geography, but it still misses the intentions of the two men, because the missionary wanted to show that they were won now for the Christian side, which to him was also the European side. Like von Oertzen, this missionary also needed a ‘success-story’ and did not take into account the real position of the two men.

From 1909 onward, Mehmed Nesimi and Ahmed Kessaf had started to write for journals issued in Bulgaria articles which stirred quite a sensation. This led to a strong reaction on the side of the Bulgarian Muslim media. Both were born in Pashmakli (Smolyan), southwest of Plovdiv. Nesimi obtained the Müderri diploma at a medrese; therefore he was an educated teacher of religion. Up to his arrival in Plovdiv, he held sermons at the mosque in Paschmakli. Kessaf attended the medrese only for a short time, joining the army afterwards as a military spiritual guide and serving in the 18<sup>th</sup> reserve regiment of the Second Army in the Greek-Turkish War. After six years, he was discharged and started working as a miller in his hometown. He was registered as sheik of the Rifaiye order. In 1907, they travelled

<sup>1</sup> Detwig von Oertzen, *Ein Christuszeuge im Orient* (Gießen: Brunnen, 1961), this and the following quotations 67-8 (translation my own).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 68 (the following as well).

<sup>3</sup> Gabriel Goltz, *Eine christlich-islamische Kontroverse um Religion, Nation und Zivilisation: Die osmanisch-türkischen Periodika der Deutschen Orient-Mission und die Zeitung Balkan in Plovdiv 1908-1911* (Münster: Lit, 2002), 15 (translation my own).

via Edirne to Izmir, where they got into trouble because of Nesimi's sermons and sailed afterwards to Jeddah, which was the next step of their planned pilgrimage to Mecca. Interrupting the journey in Beirut, they came into contact with Maronite Christians and finally travelled to Damascus. However, they never reached Mecca. After the restoration of the Constitution, they returned to Bulgaria via Izmir, Edirne and Thessaloniki. Meanwhile, they wanted to come closer to Christianity, and for that reason they appealed to the Metropolitan of Plovdiv. But here they were discouraged in their enterprise and advised to go to Sofia. However, the Armenians in Plovdiv led them to Awetaranian, a Turkish convert from Islam to Christianity, who took for himself an Armenian name after his baptism. Both Mullahs attracted international attention later on. Between 1909 and 1910, they taught Islamic studies at a seminar in Potsdam – Nesimi taught Arabic and Qur'anic interpretation, and Kessaf Sufism and Sufi philosophy. Later, they worked at the department of manuscripts of the Royal Library. Ahmed Kessaf died on 8 September 1912, Nesimi on 5 February 1942. Their truly comprehensive literary work has not been thoroughly explored yet, but it aroused great interest on the side of the academics of their time, for instance Martin Hartman, the founder of the German Society for Islamic Studies, who refers several times in his Opus Magnum *The Islamic Orient* to their work<sup>4</sup>, or William Henry Temple Gairdner, the director of the Church Missionary Society in Cairo at that time, who used their texts.<sup>5</sup>

The argumentation of Nesimi and Kessaf is at a first glance simple and schematic.<sup>6</sup> They constantly distinguished between progress and civilisation on the one hand and backwardness and savageness on the other hand. They were interested in what is useful or damaging. Thus, this progress is related to liberty and equality. In their opinion, backwardness was obvious where, for example, women were excluded from public places.<sup>7</sup> The hermeneutical criterion would be a sort of benefit-oriented interpretation which promotes the inner truth. An independent process of making a legal decision would rely on reason and on the Qur'an. Religion should be reformed and fit the time. Both scholars spoke against a basic opposition between Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Religions could be adjusted to one another by means of interpretations.

It is noteworthy that none of them used the Bible, but both argued on the basis of certain Qur'anic verses and Prophet's traditions, using at the same time Islamic theological and juridical works. Both scholars were called "apostates, who

<sup>4</sup> On Hartmann, see: Gotthard Jäschke, "Islamforschung der Gegenwart: Martin Hartmann zum Gedächtnis," *Die Welt des Islams* 23 (1941): 111-21.

<sup>5</sup> On Temple Gairdner, see: Constance E. Padwick, *Temple Gairdner of Cairo* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929); Michael T. Shelley, "Temple Gairdner of Cairo Revisited," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10.3 (1999): 261-78.

<sup>6</sup> Goltz, *Eine christlich-islamische Kontroverse*, 86-91.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-101.

deserted their religion” by their Muslim opponents.<sup>8</sup> The two offended men denied having become Christians. They pointed to the freedom of conscience as something that should be entirely normal in a civilised society. By reason of the equality principle, no religion can be disdained. Therefore, they equally loved Muslims, Christians and members of other religions. Unlike them, they were striving to acknowledge the truth irrespective of religion and to preserve the mysteries of all religions in their hearts. They understood themselves as healed of the religious fanaticism sickness and serving now the friendship and love among all people.

But they shared in their own manner a moral founded on western values. The background question referred to was what was necessary for the survival of the Ottoman Empire. The content of their argumentation basically corresponded to the Islamic reformatory speech. However, their approach of a truth prevailing over religions, their religiosity independent of a specific religion and the challenging analogy between the slogan of the French Revolution and the Christian knowledge naturally attracted the accusation of atheism. They both had their roots in the Muslim mystical milieu of the Balkans. Their concept of the unity of being originated from Ibn Arabi and it played an important role in the context of the Second Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire; both declared to have studied Ibn Arabi. They and their liberal-mystical contemporaries were all concerned with a religious synthesis, but also with a synthesis between the modern scientific knowledge and the religious understanding.

No wonder, then, that in Germany, because of their views, their Christianity was contested. The dominating view of the Protestant missionaries in Bulgaria included them both in the field of interculturality in such a manner that they appear as alienated from one side and incorporated in the other. Because of their mingling with Christian or Western ideas, the Muslim view of their opponents in the controversy excluded them from Islam. Unlike these perspectives, the two scholars document the dream of transculturality in an impressive way. It is this reality which will open up the transcultural space that can mainly be studied today on the basis of individual migrants’ biographies.

### **Outlook on the Academic Discourse**

I am not you and you are not me, but I can see something in your life which appears to be something from my life, and furthermore I explore what unifies you and me.

Can I face you in a manner that I am allowed to learn from you, so that I can absorb what belongs to you and not to me? Can I overcome our differences towards what unifies you and me, without neglecting our respective characters? How can I preserve the new that arises when I have to combine two cultures in one

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 118–20.

identity, e.g. if I am a Turkish Muslim in Germany or an Oriental Christian in the Islamic world? Can I only understand the other if I ‘convert’ to his or her religion or culture? What happens to me after this ‘conversion,’ when I come back, with a new perspective, to my own position? Do I have to ‘re-convert’? Are patchwork-identities the only thing possible? How can we preserve the respective individualities and yet be open for a deeper understanding of the Other? Freedom, love, justice, equality: these are keywords that are never definitely defined but always in flow, proved in life. They are always illusion and yet reality. Religion and culture can shape the meaning of these values but also have to match themselves with them.

In their recently published book *Interkulturalität*, Hamid Reza Yousefi and Ina Braun define ‘transculturality’ like this: transculturality is a common culture beyond cultural peculiarities.<sup>9</sup> They refer to Wolfgang Welsch who holds that the complexity of particularistic culture and hybridity are adequately reflected in the concept ‘transculturality,’ in order to overcome those separate entities which are implied in the concepts of ‘interculturality’ and ‘multiculturality.’<sup>10</sup> However, Welsch’s thesis provoked massive critique. For example, Ralf Elm states that the concept of ‘transculturality’ does not capture the “collective deep structures and basic orientations”;<sup>11</sup> Bernhard Waldenfels claims that there is “no space beyond cultures [...] that can be called transcultural”;<sup>12</sup> Christoph Antweiler simply called Welsch’s approach “badly idealistic.”<sup>13</sup> All critics are more or less concerned with separation, differentiation and diversity within cultures. This is what Yousefi and Braun also demonstrate in a straightforward comment on Welsch: “What is ignored here are the enduring differences.”<sup>14</sup> They ask the rhetorical question: “Those Turks who helped to build up Germany 50 years ago and who are a ‘part’ of this society today, are they transcultural?”<sup>15</sup>

I would answer: Yes, they are. Of course, they are not completely ‘transcultural’; they are also intercultural, bi- or poly-cultural, hybrid, often highly particularistic, sometimes multicultural. When the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, speaking to the Turks in Germany, declared that assimilation is a “crime

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<sup>9</sup> Hamid Reza Yousefi and Ina Braun, *Interkulturalität: Eine interdisziplinäre Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2011), 108 (translation my own).

<sup>10</sup> Wolfgang Welsch, “Transkulturalität: Zwischen Globalisierung und Partikularisierung,” *Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache* 26 (2000): 330 and 336 (translation my own).

<sup>11</sup> Ralf Elm, *Notwendigkeit, Aufgaben und Ansätze einer interkulturellen Philosophie: Grundbedingungen eines Dialogs der Kulturen* (Bonn: ZEI, 2001), 14 (translation my own).

<sup>12</sup> Ralf Elm, *Notwendigkeit, Aufgaben und Ansätze einer interkulturellen Philosophie: Grundbedingungen eines Dialogs der Kulturen* (Bonn: ZEI, 2001), 14 (translation my own).

<sup>13</sup> Christoph Antweiler, *Interkultureller Ethnologie* (Nordhausen: Bautz, 2007), 91 (translation my own).

<sup>14</sup> Yousefi and Braun, *Interkulturalität*, 109 (translation my own).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

against humanity,”<sup>16</sup> or when German politicians announced that this country has reached the “limits of integration,” these statements demonstrate human shortcomings which result from particular interests.<sup>17</sup> They say, however, nothing about the potential for transcultural existence, which transcends these very particular interests and focuses on those aspects which are common for all people. Is Europe already as senile as thinking and acting only in its own interest, regardless of its responsibility for the world? Does Europe lack visions and ideas for its future, so that it settles for doing only the least manageable things? Transcultural existence does not mean an existence beyond all cultural peculiarities, as the critics say. It is more like a passage through all particularism and interaction toward a common ground or a common aim – firstly with a look on the region or place where we live, secondly with a look on the entire globe.

Transcultural existence is not a vision, nothing that politics is supposed to bring about; rather, it is a reality that has always been noticeable in human life (at least from the outer view). In any case, when concepts or theories claim to universally explain reality, their inventors are certainly blind to the richness and fullness of life and world. In contrast, the concept of ‘transculturality’ adheres to the single and united reality of all humans, which is probably not achievable at all, yet always effective. Transculturality is never simply given but always effective when there is the possibility to evolve.

One author who thought and wrote about these issues with deep insight was Albert Schweitzer. He coined a phrase that I think is as profound as it is simple: “I am life that wants to live among life that wants to live.”<sup>18</sup> Is this idealistic? I don’t mind. For I think it is above all this: human and visionary and beneficial for the shaping of Europe’s and the world’s future.

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<sup>16</sup> The speech is documented online: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/erdogan-rede-in-koeln-im-wortlaut-assimilation-ist-ein-verbrechen-gegen-die-menschlichkeit-1.293718> (in German translation, accessed 29 March 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the debate after Erdogan’s speech, as summarized, e.g., by Helen Pidd, “Germany Hits Back after Turkish PM Erdogan Tells Immigrants to Resist Assimilation,” *The Guardian*, 28 February 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/feb/28/turkish-pm-addresses-immigrants-germany> (accessed 29 March 2012).

<sup>18</sup> A valuable resource for further reading in Schweitzer is *Albert Schweitzer’s Ethical Vision: A Sourcebook*, ed. Predrag Cicovacki (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

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# **“Here We Go Again”**

## **The Supposed Failure of Multiculturalism in Historical Perspective**

Janny de Jong

### **Introduction**

“Here we go again.” That was the weary reaction of a British official to the speech British Prime Minister David Cameron held on 5 February 2011 at the Munich Security Conference about the need to change British policy towards minorities in Great Britain.<sup>1</sup> “State multiculturalism” had encouraged different cultures in Britain to live different lives, Cameron had argued, while failing to provide a sense of togetherness and a “vision of society” to which these cultures want to belong.<sup>2</sup> This by no means constituted a new insight in the supposed problem of ‘separateness,’ and anything but a fresh solution to it. Indeed, the stress on Britishness, the need for patriotism and common values were hobbyhorses of the Labour Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown as well. Though in all fairness Cameron also propagated to build “a stronger pride in local identity,” these more subtle tones were lost in the heavy media attention the speech received.

Proclaiming multiculturalism dead seems to have become the favourite pastime of leading politicians in Europe. After all, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel had uttered similar statements. The most common approach towards the perceived failure of multiculturalism is the strengthening of a sense of national belonging and collective identity. For ethnic minorities, integration now often seems to imply assimilation.

This is paradoxical if one considers the official motto of the European Union (EU): ‘unity in diversity.’ The motto is best known as an antidote to the fear that national identities will be eclipsed by ‘Europe.’ Yet, the slogan has also been applied to minorities. The year 2008, for instance, was proclaimed European Year of Intercultural Dialogue; the poster used for the annual celebration of Europe Day

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<sup>1</sup> “David Cameron’s Muddled Speech on Multiculturalism,” *The Economist*, 11 February 2011, [http://www.economist.com/blogs/bagehot/2011/02/britain\\_and\\_multiculturalism](http://www.economist.com/blogs/bagehot/2011/02/britain_and_multiculturalism) (accessed 29 December 2011).

<sup>2</sup> “PM’s Speech at the Munich Security Conference,” 10 – The Official Site of the British Prime Minister’s Office, 5 February 2011, <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference/> (accessed 29 December 2011).

on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May that year showed a boy and a girl, each of different complexion, painting a globe while the caption read “it is not them and us, it is you and me.”<sup>3</sup> However, increasingly the theme of diversity has become unpopular in the national context, especially since the rise of rightist populist parties playing the anti-multiculturalism card. Already in 2001, Finnish social geographer Anssi Paasi used the expression “political dynamite” when referring to the links between bounded space, culture and identity. He mentioned the substantive growth of rightist parties in this respect. In the meantime, this development has only gained more momentum: no longer can the support of rightist parties in, for instance, the Netherlands or Finland be described as “close to zero,” as Paasi in 2001 was still able to do.<sup>4</sup> Though these more recent rightist parties and movements all have their own characteristics, they agree upon the dislike of foreigners, especially Muslims.

This does not mean that criticism on the supposed failure of integration of ethnic minorities is limited to rightist parties only. Indeed, in the Netherlands, it was a social democratic sociologist, researcher at the Wiardi Beckman Foundation<sup>5</sup>, who in 2000 published an op-ed called “The Multicultural Tragedy” in the quality national newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*. It inspired a large debate on the merits of the multicultural society both in the media and in parliament, though his ideas about a fundamentalist Islam and the costs of mass immigration as well as his pleas for a more assertive nationalism by then already were not exceptional.<sup>6</sup> A more recent example is the German Social Democratic Party member Thilo Sarrazin, who stated without much ado in *Deutschland schafft sich ab: Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen*: “[W]e do not want national minorities.” Muslim immigrants – often poorly educated and with large families – made Germany more stupid, he claimed. From the outset, this utterly polemical book drew much attention and it broke selling records of non-fiction books immediately. With 13 editions and a total number of 1.5 million published copies, it unsurprisingly ended in position number one on the 2010 top-selling list.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Europa – Official Website of the European Union, no date, [http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/gallery/2008/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/9-may/gallery/2008/index_en.htm) / (accessed 29 December 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Anssi Paasi, “Europe as a Social Process and Discourse: Considerations of Place, Boundaries and Identity,” *European Urban and Regional Studies* 8.1 (2001): 18.

<sup>5</sup> The *Wiardi Beckman Stichting voor de Sociaal-Democratie* is the scientific institute closely related to the Dutch social democratic party Partij van de Arbeid.

<sup>6</sup> Leo and Jan Lucassen point to a number of predecessors, mainly Social Democrats, in their *Winnaars en Verliezers: een Nuchtere Balans van Vijfhonderd Jaar Immigratie* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2011), 25–31. For the article see Paul Scheffer, “Het Multiculturele Drama,” *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 January 2000, <http://retro.nrc.nl/W2/Lab/Multicultureel/scheffer.html> (accessed 6 January 2012). See also Paul Scheffer, *Het Land van Aankomst*, 3rd ed. (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> “Sarrazin bricht Verkaufsrekord,” Spiegel Online, 29 October 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/0,1518,726206,00.html>; “Thilo Sarrazin, Alle Artikel und Hintergründe,” Spiegel Online, no date, [http://www.spiegel.de/thema/thilo\\_sarrazin/](http://www.spiegel.de/thema/thilo_sarrazin/) (both accessed 30 December 2011). See also: “An Immigration Row in Germany: Sarrazin vs the Saracens,” *The Economist*, 1 September 2010, [http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2010/09/immigration\\_row\\_germany](http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2010/09/immigration_row_germany) (accessed 30 December 2011).

How should this flood of negative news on immigrants, asylum seekers and the supposed failure of the multicultural society be explained? In order to provide an answer to this question, a historical perspective may be helpful, also to explain the different approaches within Europe. Firstly, however, the term multiculturalism should be examined more closely.

### **Multiculturalism versus Assimilation**

The term multiculturalism came into use in the 1960s and 1970s. In the academic literature on multiculturalism, Canada plays an important role because the Canadian government at an early stage, in 1971, officially announced a multicultural policy to meet issues of ethnic and cultural diversity. Diversity in Canada already was institutionalised because of the English-French duality; this circumstance helped to address the issue of meeting the challenge that the growing number of ethnic minorities of immigrant origins posed. In 1971, at the official launch of the policy, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau put forward that the various immigrant groups should not be required to assimilate and in this process lose their own ethnic identity. The idea was that keeping one's ethnic identity would actually enhance the social cohesion in the state, provided that social inclusion and participation of the immigrants were assured as well.<sup>8</sup> The importance of these last provisions is often overlooked.

Multiculturalism was devised as an alternative for and protest against the idea of assimilation. Assimilation is often seen as typically French, because ideally there is only one, French culture which every French citizen must adhere to. This French policy was already dominant in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when colonies such as Algeria were proclaimed an integral part of France (1848). Citizenship for indigenous Algerians was possible, but only if they renounced Islam. Therefore, the republican conception of citizenship in France is closely connected to a radical secularism (*laïcité*). French citizenship does not “allow, at least in theory, any body of citizens to be differentially identified, for example as Arab,” writes sociologist Tariq Modood. *Laïcité* implies that religion should not be part of politics and the public sphere.<sup>9</sup> The charter drafted by France's High Council for Integration (HCI), that applicants for French nationality need to sign as of January 2012, contains for example the following statement: “[A]pplicants will no longer be able to

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<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey G. Reitz, “Assessing Multiculturalism as a Behavioural Theory,” in *Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion: Potentials and Challenges of Diversity*, ed. Jeffrey G. Reitz et al. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Tariq Modood, “Muslims and European Multiculturalism,” OpenDemocracy, 15 May 2003, [http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe\\_islam/article\\_1214.jsp](http://www.opendemocracy.net/faith-europe_islam/article_1214.jsp) (accessed 3 January 2012).

claim allegiance to another country while on French soil.”<sup>10</sup> Dual nationalities are possible, though this unsurprisingly has also come under attack.

Of course the French idea of assimilation is not the only reading of what assimilation entails. In settler societies, such as, for instance, the United States, early research has been conducted on how the various immigrants could merge into one nation. In this respect, the metaphor of the melting pot has been used. One could also mention the four stages scheme of sociologist Robert E. Park (1926) (contacts, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation) that supposedly structures race relations.<sup>11</sup> Park’s theories, also about the so-called ‘marginal man,’ were quite influential.

The point is not only that the ideas of both multiculturalism and assimilation are not clear-cut and mean different things in different contexts; there is also fuzziness about what integration entails. In a recent article on Turkish integration in Germany, the definition of what constitutes the most successful integration reads as follows: “[I]mmigrant communities resemble the upper and middle classes of the majority society; members become blended almost seamlessly, leaving behind their cultural differences.”<sup>12</sup> In this definition, the most successful or perfect integration therefore means assimilation.

The idea behind multiculturalism, however, is that integration is possible without dropping all cultural differences. Integration is a “dynamic and two-sided process of change,” the *Annual Report Integration 2008* of the Dutch government agency Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau (Netherlands Institute for Social Research) states: it starts with the willingness to build opportunities to acquire a position in society. Successful integration does not necessarily imply that all norms and values or behaviour of the majority population are copied. On the other hand, there are also limits to multicultural accommodation.<sup>13</sup> The question thus is how to accommodate cultural diversity and strengthen the democratic state at the same time.

The issue has become more complex because of the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 and the bombings in Spain (2004) and England (2005). In Great Britain, a government Preventing Violent Extremism programme, for instance, solely concentrated on Muslims. In 2010, a report of the House of Com-

<sup>10</sup> “France Makes It Harder to Become French,” France 24, 30 December 2011, <http://www.france24.com/en/20111229-france-tightens-screws-immigration-election-looms-sarkozy-gueant-citizenship> (accessed 3 January 2012).

<sup>11</sup> “Assimilation,” *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, 1968, *Encyclopedia.com*, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3045000060.html> (accessed 3 January 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Ahmet Yükleven and Gökçe Yurdakul, “Islamic Activism and Immigrant Integration: Turkish Organizations in Germany,” *Immigrants & Minorities* 29.1 (2011): 64.

<sup>13</sup> Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, ed., *Jaarrapport Integratie 2008 (Annual Report Integration 2008)* (The Hague and Heerlen: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2008). See also Michael Murphy, *Multiculturalism: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2012), chapter 7.

mons on this programme criticised this one-sided focus as “unhelpful” and “stigmatising.”<sup>14</sup>

The focus preferably should shift to integration in relation to citizenship.<sup>15</sup> Proper education plays a key role here because it promotes social mobility. This policy is not ‘sexy,’ though, or in any case not sexy enough to ‘sell’ it to the public. Therefore, there is more stress on the idea of national identity, unity, history, patriotism and national values. In France, for instance, a Ministry of National Identity was set up in 2007, in an attempt, writes Tzvetan Todorov, to capture part of the popular vote. Todorov, Director of Research at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, is himself a naturalised Frenchman whose country of origin is Bulgaria. He neatly makes a distinction between civic rights and identity. Of course a newcomer to a country can be required to respect its laws, but “public duties and private feelings, and values and traditions are not all on the same level. Only totalitarian states make the love of one’s country obligatory.”<sup>16</sup>

Yet, various European countries have now installed exams for prospective citizens, in which values play a distinctive role. New citizens should be able to show that they are capable of understanding the way of living in their prospective country. In the Netherlands, these exams use elements that refer to the Dutch public performance of sexual identity, such as gay marriages. Values also play a role in the criticism of the head scarf and more recently the *nikaab* and the *burkha*. In the Netherlands, it is not so much the secular society on which the debate is centred, like in France, but (sexual) liberty and gender issues.<sup>17</sup> In 2011, the same motivation was used in the bill to ban clothing (such as the *burkha*) that covers the face. The Dutch cabinet argued this general ban was necessary to “protect the character and good habits of public life in the Netherlands.”<sup>18</sup>

## Citizenship, Migration and Globalisation

Citizenship is, of course, closely related to the state. Multiculturalism as well as assimilation can be described as strategies to ensure a cohesive state. This question has grown in importance because the evolution of global international migration

<sup>14</sup> House of Commons, Community and Local Government Committee, ed., *Preventing Violent Extremism: Sixth Report of Session 2009-10* (London: The Stationary Office, 2010), 3.

<sup>15</sup> Ruud Koopmans, Paul Statham and Marco Giugni, *Contested Citizenship: Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fear of Barbarians: Beyond the Clash of Civilizations*, translated from the French by Andrew Brown, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 80-1.

<sup>17</sup> See for an elaboration on this issue Peter van der Veer, “Pim Fortuyn, Theo van Gogh, and the Politics of Tolerance in the Netherlands,” *Public Culture* 18.1 (2006): 111-24.

<sup>18</sup> “Ministerraad Stemt in met Wetsvoorstel Verbod Gelaatsbedekkende Kleding,” press release of the Department of Internal Affairs, 16 September 2011, <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/bzk/documenten-en-publicaties/persberichten/2011/09/16/ministerraad-stemt-in-met-wetsvoorstel-verbod-gelaatsbedekkende-kleding.html> (accessed 26 February 2012).

has increased the ethnic diversity, especially in modern industrial societies. No longer is immigration limited to traditional settler societies such as the United States, Australia, New Zealand or Canada. Approximately 200 million people worldwide do not live in their country of origin. In this respect, multiple identities seem the natural form.<sup>19</sup>

Though globalisation encourages migration and immigration, this does not mean that a ‘mass migration’ process is going on in every European country. In fact, one should be differentiating between the various countries and various migration flows. There is, for instance, a large difference between former colonial powers of Western Europe that all have significant numbers of repatriates and migrants from their former colonies, and the countries who did not have a colonial empire and are situated in Central and Eastern Europe. There also no longer exists such a thing like ‘mass migration.’ *The OECD Factbook 2011* showed that in fact the net immigration rate in many European countries reduced in the last decennium, mainly because of a more severe immigration policy (Figure 1). Yet, debates in (social) media and politics seem to suggest that the numbers of migrants as well as the problems are increasing. There is, in other words, a growing rift between the actual reality and the perceived image. Media play a distinctive role here.

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<sup>19</sup> See for recent figures on migration worldwide: *OECD Factbook 2011: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics* (Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932502923> (accessed 10 January 2012); “In Praise of a Second (or Third) Passport: Multiple Identities Are Natural. Citizenship Laws Should Catch Up,” *The Economist*, 7 January 2012, <http://www.economist.com/node/21542413> (accessed 10 January 2012).

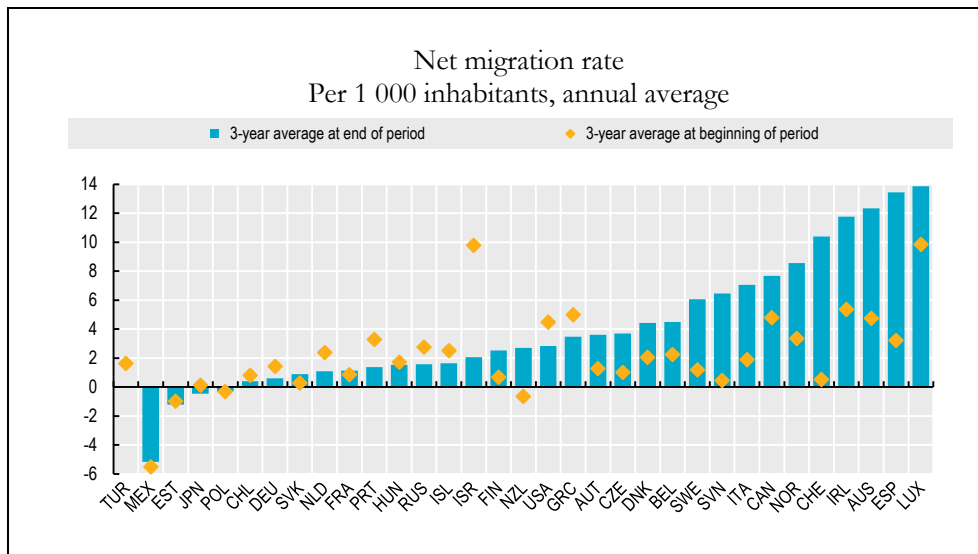


Figure 1<sup>20</sup>

### The Public Debate and the Role of the Media: The Dutch Case

The Dutch case illustrates that public debates have also become more and more aggressive in tone. Where in the 1970s and 1980s the tone in public debate was very careful and politically correct, offensive and even insulting remarks are now accepted to a high degree as a normal pattern.

In the international debate on multiculturalism, the Netherlands plays an important role. The country that once was pictured as a prototype and role-model of a tolerant nation, where various religions and political convictions co-existed harmoniously, proved to be not the multicultural heaven after all. Migration historians Leo and Jan Lucassen aptly call the period from 1975 to 1990 “the multicultural myth.” They point out that the idea to foster the cultural identity of the newcomers only formed a rather small element in the policy towards ethnic minorities: since the first official government report, published in 1979, the core business was to ameliorate the social and economic conditions of ethnic minorities, as well as to ensure legal equality. It is ironic that especially the Social Democrats were hesitant and careful with regard to policies to safeguarding the cultural identity of migrants.

<sup>20</sup> OECD Factbook 2011: *Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics*.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932502961> The three-year averages referred to concern the years 2007 to 2009 (end of period); and 1997 to 1999 (beginning of period).

In addition, cultural identity policies were meant to be temporary as a transition to full integration.<sup>21</sup> What is important, however, is that a taboo existed on discussing negative consequences of immigration, or issues that could be used as ammunition by right-wingers.

The murders of the flamboyant populist politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 (by an animal activist) and of the controversial filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim activist in 2004 fuelled an already very aggressive debate. The political arena seemed to have changed in the time span of only a few years. The rosy myth of tolerance was traded in for a bleak vision of a society where the core values were seemingly threatened by “hordes of immigrants and newcomers.” A particularly negative role in this whole was played by Islam. Islam became the “unifying symbol” of unwelcome foreigners, whether these were asylum seekers or former guest workers.<sup>22</sup> Yet, Islam in reality can hardly be the common denominator, not only because there are many different groups and subgroups; it is also not the religion of all immigrants.

A couple of publications investigated the change in tone in Dutch public debate as well as whether multicultural policies really had failed. British-Dutch Ian Buruma wrote an intriguing report on his inquiry into the reasons for the apparent changes in tolerance and multicultural policies. In *Murder in Amsterdam*, he particularly pointed to the role of the memory of the Second World War and the sad story of the Jewish minority, as an important impetus to defend the multicultural ideal.<sup>23</sup> Others, like journalist Frans Verhagen, tried to give a balanced view on what can be considered a success and what still needs improvement. A long historical perspective was taken by Lucassen and Lucassen, who investigated the main claims held against immigration. Interestingly, both Verhagen and Lucassen and Lucassen used the word ‘nuchter’ in their respective titles.<sup>24</sup> The English translation, ‘establishing the hard facts,’ misses the double meaning: ‘nuchter’ in the meaning of ‘without fuss’ traditionally scores very high in the self-image of Dutch culture.

It is not only the tone; the framing of the public debate is also very important. Especially Geert Wilders, leader of the anti-immigrant PVV (Partij voor de Vrijheid, Freedom Party), is very apt at getting much media attention with very simple methods like tweets and fierce rhetoric. By giving attention to these tweets, media play a very significant role in keeping this party in the public attention. Quality newspapers like *NRC Handelsblad*, *Trouw*, and the *Volkskrant* all publish or comment on these tweets, because, as one editor of *Trouw* explained, Twitter has

<sup>21</sup> Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars*, chapter 2.

<sup>22</sup> Van der Veer, “Pim Fortuyn”: 116.

<sup>23</sup> Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam: Liberal Europe, Islam and the Limits of Tolerance* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> Frans Verhagen, *Hoego Mislukt?: De Nuchtere Feiten over de Integratie in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2010); Lucassen and Lucassen, *Winnaars*.



become a form of political ‘drama’<sup>25</sup>, just like debates on television or radio. But there is more to it than that. *De Nederlandse Nieuwsmonitor*, of the Dutch Scientific Institute for Journalism, investigated in 2011 how many tweets were quoted in newspapers. The report warned that the PVV leader was given a kind of luxury position in the Dutch news. Because he only uses Twitter as a transmitter of political messages and accepts no invitations for interviews, it is one-way traffic without the possibility of posing critical questions or entering debate. In addition, because the PVV supported the Dutch minority government but did not form a part of it, it was not possible to force the PVV leader to comment on these issues in parliament. Not surprisingly, the most quoted tweet of Wilders was about the multicultural society in which the Social Democratic Party was congratulated with the “mass immigration” to the Netherlands and the import of “many criminals and underprivileged.”<sup>26</sup>

Very instructive for the way a populist party like the PVV operates and is able to influence public opinion was the establishment of a registration point in February 2012, where problems with and complaints about migrants from the Eastern part of Europe could be filed online. Of course, the economic malaise since 2008 has had its impact here as well. Earlier, in the provincial elections, the Polish community had also been accused by the PVV of crime, drunkenness and stealing away jobs, thus reinvigorating the old fear of the ‘Polish plumber.’ Immediately, the Embassy of Poland protested and the PVV’s initiative sparked a lot of attention. Media subsequently reported the rise of support for the PVV in polls. This media coverage in itself again strengthens the electoral position of the party, because research has demonstrated that voters are most attracted to news that refers to the competition between parties and in elections tend to favour winners over losers.<sup>27</sup>

## Conclusion

Multiculturalism has become framed in the public debate as a failure, as a soft approach to real problems. Even though it is fairly easy to show that this perception is not correct, this does not mean that this bad image will disappear all of a sudden.

<sup>25</sup> “Tweet van Wilders was Onzin, maar Nieuwswaardige Onzin,” *Trouw*, 15 January 2012, <http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4328/Opinie/article/detail/3121720/2012/01/15/Tweet-van-Wilders-was-onzin-maar-nieuwswaardige-onzin.dhtml> (accessed 22 February 2012).

<sup>26</sup> “Politiek 2.0: Debatteren in 140 Tekens,” *De Nederlandse Nieuwsmonitor*, 28 December 2011, <http://www.nieuwsmonitor.net> (accessed 22 February 2012). Unsurprisingly, Twitter also has led to alternative forms of political lobbying. Ethical norms of journalism do not count. See Tom Jan Meeus, “Dankzij Twitter is de Commentator ook Lobbyist,” *NRC Weekend*, February 25/26 2012, 27.

<sup>27</sup> “Job Cohen in het Nieuws: van Gedoodverfde Premier tot Grote Gedoger van de Premier,” *De Nederlandse Nieuwsmonitor*, 21 Februari 2012, <http://www.nieuwsmonitor.net> (accessed 22 February 2012).

The problems connected to the public discussions about immigration and Islam are very significant because they reflect upon the values of a democratic society.

To a large degree, playing the immigration/Islam card is a way of getting attention: it seems to work as a simple method to gain political support. Media play a significant and active role, especially by using tweets as ‘news.’ Internet and social media in particular change the ways news are gathered and digested. Social media have grown into an alternative news source, with their own rules. Twitter especially is not suited for a deliberate and nuanced debate: it encourages polarisation and strong views.

History is important in this respect, not so much to produce a patriotic vision of the nation but to show how immigration and migration developed and, by doing so, to create a more balanced view on migration and the role that this phenomenon has played and still plays in society. Populism will hardly help creating solutions to the big issues that are at stake. Clarity of what democracy stands for is crucial, especially in the period of economic crisis that evolved since 2008.<sup>28</sup> In the end, the spectacle democracy may constitute one of the gravest dangers for society.

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<sup>28</sup> See for an interesting analysis of the global economic crisis and the consequences for democracy in advanced democracies Charles A. Kupchan, “The Democratic Malaise: Globalization and the Threat to the West,” *Foreign Affairs* 91.1 (January/February 2012): 62-7.

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# European Multiculturalism

## Is It Really Dead?

John McCormick

### Introduction

There has been considerable speculation in recent years regarding the alleged failure of multiculturalism in Europe. Much has been made, for example, of the assertions in 2010 and 2011 by the leaders of three major European states regarding the divisions within their respective societies. In October 2010, German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that multiculturalism in her country had “failed utterly,” and that the suggestion that Germans and foreign workers could live “happily side by side” with one another had been an illusion. In February 2011, British Prime Minister David Cameron argued that 30 years of “state multiculturalism” in Britain had failed because it had encouraged different cultures to live separate lives and had weakened the collective identity of Britain. A few days later, French President Nicolas Sarkozy declared multiculturalism in his country to have been a “failure,” arguing that France had been too concerned about the identity of those arriving from outside and not concerned enough about its own identity.

It is important to note that all three sets of comments were made by conservative political leaders in the context of recent Muslim immigration from outside of Europe. For Merkel, the (unspoken) issue was guest workers (primarily Turkish and Muslim) and for Cameron and Sarkozy the issue was the growing Islamic segments of their respective societies. Cameron was making a speech about national security in the face of terrorism perpetrated by Islamic extremists, to which – he argued – many young Muslims were drawn because of the “question of identity.” They found it hard to identify with traditional Islam but also with Britain, because Britain had allowed “the weakening of our collective identity.” Where Britain was ready to criticize racism on the part of white citizens, Cameron continued, it had been too cautious and fearful to stand up to objectionable views held by racial minorities. What the country now needed was “a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism” involving the promotion

of values such as democracy and the rule of law.<sup>1</sup> His comments were immediately criticized by many Muslim groups for placing too much of the onus on minority communities to integrate while failing to say how the wider community might aid in that process.

Given the context of the three sets of remarks, the choice of the term ‘multiculturalism’ was unfortunate, not least because of the difficulties inherent in according it a generally acceptable definition, and more particularly because the three leaders were not in fact talking about culture at all, but were using the term as code for religious and racial diversity. In other words, they were not so much bemoaning the failure of multiculturalism as of multiracialism and of the assimilation of Islam. But they could not have admitted that efforts to cross racial or religious boundaries had failed without generating considerable controversy, and thus they – like many other observers – opted for the softer and more politically correct notion of multiculturalism. And yet Europe in truth has long had a tradition of effective and vibrant multiculturalism. Many Europeans may still identify with states and nations, and may have limited tolerance of recent immigrants, but they have rarely been able to isolate themselves from their neighbours and have long adapted to the exchange of ideas and values that have come from the blending of their cultures.

This article will argue not only that multiculturalism in Europe is not dead, but that it is in fact central to the meaning and identity of Europe. It will contrast the European experience with the melting-pot philosophy that has been central to the experience of the United States and Brazil, and will argue that the European experience is more akin to that of Canada or Australia. It will suggest that the problems often ascribed to the failure of multiculturalism are in fact a function of race and religion rather than of culture, and that it is not the co-existence of different cultures that has created tensions in Europe so much as racism and the difficulties of blending European secularism with the preferences of its Muslim residents.

## Defining Multiculturalism

The core problem with understanding the place of multiculturalism in Europe is that the term is applied differently in different circumstances by scholars and policymakers<sup>2</sup> (assuming, that is, that they define it at all). A review of the literature reveals that the term is applied not only to culture (a term which raises its own definitional challenges) but also to race and ethnicity, and even occasionally to gender, sexual orientation, religion, and social class. In the few cases where the term is defined, it is often given a meaning that is specific to a particular circum-

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<sup>1</sup> “PM’s Speech at the Munich Security Conference,” 10 – The Official Site of the British Prime Minister’s Office, 5 February 2011, <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference/> (accessed 28 December 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Conrad William Watson, *Multiculturalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000).

stance. Thus Modood defines it as “the political accommodation of minorities formed by immigration to western countries from outside the prosperous West”,<sup>3</sup> and notes his particular interest in political multiculturalism, which he defines as “the recognition of group difference within the public sphere of laws, policies, democratic discourses and the terms of a shared citizenship and national identity.”<sup>4</sup> He sees multiculturalism, then, as an issue of immigration rather than of culture. For Kymlicka, efforts to understand multiculturalism are confused by the ambiguity that exists between the notions of ‘multinationalism’ and ‘polyethnicity’. He associates the first with coexistence within a political unit of previously self-governing societies, and the latter with immigration.<sup>5</sup>

The absence of clear and consistent applications means that multiculturalism can mean whatever we want it to mean, thus undermining its value as a conceptual tool. This article uses it in the specific sense of a policy or practice based on tolerance and respect for the identities of different cultures within a society. In this regard, it stands in contrast to monoculturalism, or the belief that societies should have a single culture, and that efforts should be made to ensure its ‘purity’ and to exclude all other cultures. It also contrasts with assimilation, or the belief that different groups should be integrated into the dominant culture by denying and quashing their distinctive qualities and values.

In the American and Brazilian contexts, assimilation is reflected in the melting pot philosophy (or myth, as many would have it) through which attempts have been made to fuse multiple nationalities, races and cultures, and to build homogeneous societies out of heterogeneous societies. In the American case, the term ‘melting pot’ was first used in the context of immigration from Europe, and was equated with Americanization, or cultural assimilation and acculturation. For Hirschman, it became “the symbol of the liberal and radical vision of American society [...] a political symbol used to strengthen and legitimize the ideology of America as a land of opportunity, where race, religion, and national origin should not be barriers to social mobility.”<sup>6</sup> It was mainly concerned with the assimilation of white Europeans into an idealized version of Anglo-America; race and religion were marginal considerations. The racial diversity of the United States – and the persistence there of racism and racial inequality – later led to numerous questions about the achievements of assimilation, spawning the alternative metaphors of ‘mosaic’ or ‘salad bowl’ to describe an arrangement in which different cultures mix but remain distinct.

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<sup>3</sup> Tariq Modood, *Multiculturalism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Will Kymlicka, “Social Unity in a Liberal State,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 13:1 (1996): 105–36.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Hirschman, “America’s Melting Pot Reconsidered,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 9 (1983): 398.

In the case of Brazil, meanwhile, the evidence is clear that black Brazilians are politically, economically and socially disadvantaged relative to their white peers.<sup>7</sup> The term ‘exclusion’ is often used to describe the status of blacks or the poor, connoting the lack of social integration “manifested in rules constraining the access of particular groups or persons to resources or limiting their access to citizenship rights.”<sup>8</sup> The argument has long been made that Brazilians are stratified by class and not by race, but disagreements with this analysis are growing, and the long-held image of Brazil as a non-racial society is under review.

Multiculturalism recognizes and generally applauds cultural diversity, promoting accommodation and inclusiveness, allowing intermingling to take place, witnessing the borrowing and adaptation of ideas, allowing different cultures to retain their distinctive qualities, and making efforts to encourage and sustain distinctions by way of language, heritage, and the channels through which different cultures can be expressed and understood, including art, traditions, cuisine, and social norms. In this sense, its European form is similar to its application in Canada, where efforts are made to make immigrants feel welcome, and where multiculturalism is constitutionally protected: the Canadian Charter of Freedoms and Rights includes the proviso that it should be “interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians.”

In some respects, ‘multiculturalism’ is a conceptual cousin of ‘cosmopolitanism’, or the idea that all humans belong to a single moral community that transcends state boundaries or national identities. This has been identified as a useful analytical tool for the European case.<sup>9</sup> The cosmopolitan view holds that all humans belong to a single community in which they are subject to the same moral standards and have a responsibility for other humans, accepting the foreign hospitably, and emphasizing the importance of drawing on different traditions and cultures, and of remaining open to other ways of life.<sup>10</sup> As Beck puts it, if nationalism is based on the principle of “either/or,” then cosmopolitanism is based on the principle of “both/and.”<sup>11</sup> David Held defines it as a “moral and political outlook

<sup>7</sup> See Edward E. Telles, *Race in Another America: The Significance of Skin Color in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Charles Gore and José B. Figueredo, ed., *Social Exclusion and Anti-Poverty Policy: A Debate* (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> For example, see Daniele Archibugi, “Principles of Cosmopolitan Democracy,” in *Re-imagining Political Community: Studies in Cosmopolitan Democracy*, ed. Daniele Archibugi, David Held and Martin Köhler (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 198–228; Gerard Delanty, “What Does it Mean to be a ‘European?’” *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences* 18:1 (2005): 11–22.

<sup>10</sup> See discussion in Margaret C. Jacob, *Strangers Nowhere in the World: The Rise of Cosmopolitanism in Early Modern Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), Introduction; Thomas W. Pogge, “Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty,” *Ethics* 103:1 (1992): 48–75; Simon Caney, *Justice beyond Borders: A Global Political Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6.

<sup>11</sup> Ulrich Beck, *The Cosmopolitan Vision* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006); Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, *Cosmopolitan Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).



which builds on the strength of the liberal multilateral order, particularly its commitment to universal standards, human rights and democratic values, and which seeks to specify general principles on which all could act.”<sup>12</sup>

### Europe as a Multicultural Society

Europe has long been multicultural because it has long been a region of invaders and immigrants who have repeatedly moved across cultural and political borders to blend ideas and philosophies. This was initially a limited form of multiculturalism, because feudalism, imperialism and – later – the class pressures of industrialization meant that cultural exchange was based on physical or structural violence determined by leaders and elites; it was not until the end of World War II that most Europeans began to personally experience different cultures. Furthermore, the state and the nation have both long exerted a strong grip on European imaginations, encouraging ordinary Europeans to define their identities according to the experiences that were closest to them and that meant the most to them. Greater social and personal mobility has combined since the end of World War II with the easing and eventual near-removal of cross-border controls and the era of mass tourism to greatly increase the opportunities for Europeans to experience other cultures within the region, both directly and indirectly.

The habit among Europeans of integrating core values and features from almost every new group with which its cultures have come into contact has been such that it is difficult anymore to be sure what constitutes a feature of the ‘home culture’ and what does not. Nineteenth century nationalism was based on the promotion of the nation-state, and yet many European states remained both multinational and multicultural, and remain so today. The consequences are reflected in the contemporary data: while there are only 40-44 sovereign states in Europe (depending on how Europe is defined), there are – according to Pan and Pfeil<sup>13</sup> – nearly 340 indigenous national minorities, to which 105 million people – or one in seven Europeans – belong. Within the EU member states alone, there are an estimated 160 national minorities, the number having been greatly increased by eastern enlargement. About one in ten EU citizens speak a minority language, and all but the smallest of European states has at least three indigenous national minorities, and in most cases many more.<sup>14</sup> Almost all European states, in other words, consist of multiple cultures.

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<sup>12</sup> David Held, *Global Covenant: The Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004), 171, 178.

<sup>13</sup> Christoph Pan and Beate Sibylle Pfeil, *National Minorities in Europe* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> See also Panikos Panayi, *An Ethnic History of Europe since 1945: Nations, States and Minorities* (Harlow: Longman, 2000).

Where the debate over multiculturalism in Europe has become confused is that in almost all recent references, the term has been used in the context of immigrants from outside the region (Turks to Germany, North Africans to France, South Asians to Britain, and so on), and has thus focused on racial and religious minorities. These make up a small number of the total population, in both absolute and relative terms: only about 25 million of the legal residents of the EU (about 3–4 per cent of the population) belong to an ethnic minority, a proportion that pales by comparison to the United States (where such minorities make up 23 per cent of the population), Russia (20 per cent), Canada (16 per cent), or China (8.5 per cent). But multiculturalism in the European context is more appropriately and accurately understood in regard to three groups of *indigenous* minorities:

- National minorities who live in one state but are the kin of national majorities in neighbouring states. These include, for example, ethnic Hungarians in Romania and Slovakia, ethnic Germans in Romania and Poland, ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia, ethnic Poles in Belarus and Lithuania, ethnic Czechs in Slovakia and vice versa, and ethnic Ukrainians in Poland. There are an estimated 25 million members of such minorities, along with 23 million Russians living in the Soviet successor states.
- Transnational minorities that are divided among two or more states but do not form a majority in any. These include the Basques and Catalans of Spain and France, and the Frisians of Germany and the Netherlands.
- Indigenous minorities living within a single state, such as the Scots and the Welsh of Britain, the Corsicans and Bretons of France, and the Galicians of Spain.

There has been a growing debate about the meaning and definition of the notion of ‘national minority,’ which has confusingly spilled over into debates about ethnicity and national identity, and has been a particular focus of the work of both the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and of the Council of Europe. A Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities was adopted by the latter in 1995, taking the broad perspective of providing for respect for ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious minorities.

Every European state has cultural minorities, ranging in proportion from lows of about 4–7 per cent of the total population in Finland, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Poland, to highs of 17–20 per cent in Bulgaria, Switzerland, Slovenia, and the exceptional case of Belgium with its split between Flemings (58 per cent), Walloons (31 per cent), and Germans (1 per cent). In spite of their generally much greater proportions (relative to racial and religious minorities), these cultural minorities are much less apparent on political or social radars, and they generally suffer far less

discrimination or hostility (notable exceptions being offered by the case of the Roma and by the example of the post-Yugoslavia conflicts in the Balkans). In the case of Britain, for example, residents of Scottish, Welsh and Irish heritage constitute about 15 per cent of the population, but have become so much a part of the social fabric that it is often difficult to distinguish among the different groups. Much the same could be said for Spain, where about 11 per cent of the population comes from national minorities, including Castilians, Leones, Catalans, Galicians and Basques.

The debate about multiculturalism in Europe tends to overlook these groups, and yet they are meaningful as an indication of the cultural diversity of the region, and are not typically associated with the same tensions deriving from issues related to racial and religious diversity. Many make demands for the preservation of their languages and religions, to be sure, and may campaign for greater autonomy, but their presence does not always lead to conflict (the problems of Northern Ireland and the Basque country being among the notable exceptions). The rise of states, rather than always recognizing national and cultural differences, usually had the opposite effect of bringing multiple cultures and nationalities under a common political authority. The rise of the European Union has further emphasized multiculturalism as Europeans have been freer to travel, and as the media have more actively reported events and stories in other European states. All along, core aspects of multiculturalism – including the right to practice different religions, to celebrate holidays associated with different cultures, to run businesses catering to cultural minorities, and to join religious and cultural organizations – have mainly survived unchanged.

That the rhetorical shift against multiculturalism in Europe has been driven less by culture than by race and religion is reflected both in its timeline and in the nature of the academic debate. Its origins are traceable to the arrival of the first waves of non-white immigrants in the 1950s and 1960s; concerns grew in the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London in 2001, 2004, and 2005; Islamic militancy has been at the heart of the declarations of the failure of multiculturalism, and the dynamics of the debate are reflected in the titles of books such as *Londonistan*<sup>15</sup> and *The Coming Balkan Caliphate*.<sup>16</sup>

Laqueur bemoans the “last days of Europe,” arguing that the region is threatened by a collision between falling birth-rates and uncontrolled immigration from Asia, Africa or the Middle East.<sup>17</sup> Because few such immigrants have a desire to be integrated into European society, he warns, there has been a continent-wide identi-

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<sup>15</sup> Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan* (Washington D.C.: Encounter, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Christopher Deliso, *The Coming Balkan Caliphate: The Threat of Radical Islam to Europe and the West* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Walter Laqueur, *The Last Days of Europe: Epitaph for an Old Continent* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2007).

ty crisis; immigrants have congregated in ghettos, and widespread educational failure has combined with religious or ideological disdain for the host country, and with resentment and xenophobia among native Europeans, to create growing political and social tensions and extremist violence. Caldwell makes similar arguments, suggesting that Europe became a multi-ethnic society “in a fit of absence of mind,” and notes that while governments have done much to accommodate the newcomers, public opinion is reacting against these efforts.<sup>18</sup> Modood argues that multiculturalism as public policy is in retreat in Europe, as states assert that minority groups either integrate or accept the dominant social and cultural mores as the price of citizenship. He does, however, condition this statement by noting that the obvious target is Muslims.<sup>19</sup>

Racism and Islamophobia aside, to suggest that Europeans are open to multiculturalism should not ignore the long history of xenophobia and stereotyping in which many Europeans have engaged. The examples of European-on-European hostility run the gamut from the Anglo-French love-hate relationship dating back centuries, historical tensions between Britain and Ireland, the residual animosity of some of its neighbours towards Germany (particularly since the two world wars), anti-Polish feelings in Germany in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and anti-Polish sentiment in France and Britain in the wake of the advent of the iconic Polish plumber. It might also be found in the residual attempts of France to defend its language against the inroads of English, but the latter seems to have been accepted as a *fait accompli* in much of the rest of Europe.

As noted earlier, if anything has died or failed in Europe it is not so much multiculturalism as multiracialism and tolerance for Islam, and in this regard the problem is more one of recent non-white immigration than of movement across internal borders in the wake of the single market. The problem is reflected in the institution of language and civics training or tests for new immigrants or citizens in Britain, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Germany, the ban on the wearing of Muslim headscarves in some parts of Europe, and the adoption in the Netherlands of an explicit policy of assimilation. It is also reflected in the support given to European anti-immigrant political parties, particularly in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands, and the growth of Islamophobia. Caldwell suggests that the Islamic challenge stems from the strength and self-confidence of Islam, which contrasts with the insecurities, malleability, and relativism of European culture; but this rather overlooks the deep divisions within Islam, its sensitivity and the rapidity with which it takes offence, and gives little weight to the idea that Europeanism is a growing political, economic, and social force.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Christopher Caldwell, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam and the West* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Modood, *Multiculturalism*.

<sup>20</sup> Caldwell, *Reflections*.

Writing about the dispute over headscarves in France, Bowen argues that it conceals underlying concerns as varied as the role of religion in schools, the development of separate communities, the threats posed by radical Islam, and gender discrimination.<sup>21</sup> The rise of Islam certainly poses challenges to notions of European secularism, with the need to meet demands for separate schools and recognition of cultural norms regarding the family and the place of women in society while at the same time protecting the principles of liberal democratic modernity. Ironically, Islam is often criticized by Europeans for its treatment of women, and yet racial and religious discrimination is alive and well in Europe, as reflected in a Pew Global Attitudes Survey that found negative views towards Muslims and Jews that were notably higher in Europe than in the United States, and growing. Almost half of Spaniards had unfavourable opinions about Jews, for example, as did 36 per cent of Poles and 20-25 per cent of Germans and the French, compared to just 7-9 per cent of Americans and Britons. As for Muslims, about half of Spaniards, Germans and Poles had unfavourable opinions, as did 38 per cent of the French and 23 per cent of Americans and Britons.<sup>22</sup>

## Conclusion

If *culture* is understood to mean the set of values, attitudes, tastes and expectations shared by a group, and if it is associated primarily with national identity, then Europe is distinctly multicultural and multinational in character, and has been for centuries. Europeans have not always agreed, and the region (or parts of it) was regularly divided by war and conflict for most of its recorded history, until the general peace achieved following World War II. But different cultures routinely achieved accommodations with one another, learned from each other, and formed shared and typically workable systems of government. While residual inter-cultural tensions continue to be found in Europe today, they rarely lead to significant levels of conflict, and – indeed – one of the great achievements of postwar Europe has been the recognition of its cultural diversity, encouraged in most European states by policies in which cultural differences have been revived, protected and celebrated, notably through the sustenance of minority languages. To suggest that multiculturalism in Europe is dead or has failed is, under the circumstances, absurd.

Where Europe has failed, however, has been in its efforts to assimilate racial and religious minorities, specifically in the form of (mainly) postwar immigrants from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean, and in the form of the growing Muslim minority found in most European states. The failure to which

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<sup>21</sup> John R. Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Pew Research Center, "Unfavorable Views of Jews and Muslims on the Increase in Europe," survey released 17 September 2008, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2008/09/17/unfavorable-views-of-jews-and-muslims-on-the-increase-in-europe/> (accessed 20 January 2012).

Merkel, Cameron, Sarkozy and others have referred, then, is not one of culture but of race and religion. The social tensions that Europe faces today are generated not so much by concerns about cultural diversity, which has long been at the heart of the European experience, but by racial and religious diversity.

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# Multiculturalism versus Transculturality

## European Film

Maria Pilar Rodríguez

### Introduction

This article<sup>1</sup> offers an illustration of recent European films that contradict official political discourses regarding the notion of multiculturalism by offering a closer position to the concept of transculturality. After a recent political declaration in which German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that attempts to build a multicultural society in Germany had utterly failed<sup>2</sup>, British Prime Minister David Cameron similarly condemned multiculturalism<sup>3</sup>, and French President Nicholas Sarkozy joined the chorus of critics.<sup>4</sup> Such political discourses tend to emphasise the ethnic, linguistic and religious assimilation of immigrants into the social and political structure of the nation, as well as the progressive abandonment of their native customs and practices.

In the last decade, European countries such as France, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland and the Netherlands have all witnessed the rise of a conservative discourse that has shifted the gravitational centre of immigration politics toward the right. While political discourses frequently ignore the supranational dimension of the term *European*, contemporary film-makers adequately address the shift from the national to the transnational that has occurred in European cinemas and societies. Such shift has been fuelled by, among other reasons, the long legacy of colonialism, the ongoing process of European integration, the consequences of the collapse of communism, continuing European mobility and contemporary diasporic displacements. As a result, European cultures and societies have witnessed a

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<sup>1</sup> A longer version of this article titled "From the National to the Transnational: European Films and Political Discourse" can be found in *Conjunctions and Disruptions: Communication, Information and Media Studies in Europe*, ed. María J. Pando Canteli, Bilbao: University of Deusto, 2011, 151-62.

<sup>2</sup> "Merkel says German Multicultural Society Has Failed," *BBC News*, 17 October 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451> (accessed 21 March 2011).

<sup>3</sup> "State Multiculturalism Has Failed, Says David Cameron," *BBC News*, 5 February 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994> (accessed 21 March 2011).

<sup>4</sup> "Nicolas Sarkozy Declares Multiculturalism Had Failed," *The Telegraph*, 11 February 2011, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/8317497/Nicolas-Sarkozy-declares-multiculturalism-had-failed.html> (accessed 21 March 2011).

previously inconceivable diversification, fragmentation and hybridization.<sup>5</sup> In that respect, certain contemporary European films have redefined our understanding of European identity and represent a challenge to contemporary national political discourses. There is a fundamental contradiction between Europe's distinctive diversity and the homogenising, official narratives that insist upon denying the reality of a system based on coexistence and interaction.

### Multiculturalism and Transculturality

As a political ideal, multiculturalism means “equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.”<sup>6</sup> Multiculturalism in general is defined in terms of public acceptance of immigrants and minority groups as distinct groups or communities, which are distinguishable from the majority with regard to language, culture and social behaviour; and which have their own associations and social infrastructure. The words by David Cameron deserve a more detailed comment in relation to Asian British cinema. Critical debate amply supports the idea that, compared with other countries in Europe, Britain has produced some of the most culturally dynamic and pleasurable examples of hybridity. Asian British films such as *Bhaji on the Beach* (Gurinder Chadha, 1993), *East is East* (Damien O'Donnell, 1999), *Anita and Me* (Metin Hüseyin, 2002), *Bend it Like Beckham* (Gurinder Chadha, 2002), and *Love + Hate* (Dominic Savage, 2005) stand out as internationally recognised productions set in multicultural Britain narrated through a social realist framework. Interviewed after the German premiere of *Bend it Like Beckham*, director Gurinder Chadha happily claimed that she had a letter from Tony Blair saying how much he loved the film, and added, “he enjoyed it especially because it represented his Britain, a very diverse, multicultural Britain.”<sup>7</sup> Blair's words in 2002 stand out in sharp contrast to Cameron's statement nine years later. This contradiction is even more remarkable, if we explore critical interpretations of the film which claim that, within Britain, multiculturalism is used for social control through the masking of social injustice and the dilution of social protest. Rajeev Balasubramanyam describes multiculturalism in Britain, as exposed by films such as *Bend it Like Beckham*, in such merciless terms:

Multiculturalism does not refer to the ideology of liberalism or cultural acceptance, and it is not a simple description of British society. It is, instead, a

<sup>5</sup> *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), iv.

<sup>6</sup> Eugenia Siapera, *Cultural Diversity and Global Media: The Mediation of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 31.

<sup>7</sup> Ellen Dengel-Janic and Lars Eckstein, “Bridehood Revisited: Disarming Concepts of Gender and Culture in Recent Asian British Film,” in *Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives in Literature, Film and the Arts*, ed. Lars Eckstein et al. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), 45.

technology of social control, racism, and the maintenance of the caste hierarchy, an instrument of delusion, oppression, and censorship in contemporary British society. Whilst multiculturalism masquerades as a celebration of the defeat of racism, it is in fact its opposite – a vehicle to suppress cultural diversity in contemporary Britain.<sup>8</sup>

He adds that such films rarely refer to contemporary social injustices in Britain, but rather to past social injustices and in them British society usually represents progressiveness whereas Asian characters are always associated with backwardness and grossly caricatured. In general, even in more benign readings of the film, there is a shared agreement on the fact that Chadha's film ingeniously negotiates British mainstream conservatism with artistic and commercial techniques extracted from the moral universe of Bollywood, which appeal to the exoticism of English viewers.<sup>9</sup> This would explain the enthusiastic response by Tony Blair, whereas the rejection of multiculturalism by David Cameron (and other European leaders) is a recent phenomenon which will require a much more detailed analysis.

In this article, I will follow the concept of transculturality as defined by Wolfgang Welsch, since it stresses the global and local interconnectedness of cultural forms in a more comprehensive manner than multiculturalism, which underlines the problems which different cultures have living together within one society. Transculturality encompasses a number of ways of life and cultures, which also interpenetrate or emerge from one another and which are in general characterised by hybridization.<sup>10</sup> Along these lines, I will now very briefly analyse two films which will facilitate an exploration of the notions of assimilation, integration and hybridization as exposed in the first fictional film by Yasmina Benguigui titled *Inch'Allah dimanche* (*Inch' Allah Sunday*), which opened in 2001, and in *Gegen die Wand* (*Against the Wall*), by Fatih Akin (2004). In both of them, a transcultural ideology can be seen in such strategies as the presence of multilingual practices, the portrayal of "in-between," fluid and hybrid characters, and the elaboration of new urban and domestic spaces created through interactions between cultures.

### *Inch'Allah Dimanche*

*Inch'Allah Dimanche* is set in 1974 and tells the story of Zouina, who leaves her native Algeria, with her three young children and domineering mother-in-law, to join her husband in France, where he has lived and worked for the past ten years.

<sup>8</sup> Rajeev Balasubramanyam, "The Rhetoric of Multiculturalism," in *Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000+: New Perspectives in Literature, Film and the Arts*, ed. Lars Eckstein et al. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), 42.

<sup>9</sup> Dengel-Janic and Eckstein, "Bridehood Revisited," 55.

<sup>10</sup> Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, Work*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 194-213.

The opening of the film informs us about the immigrant family regrouping, which took place in France around those years. In the aftermath of World War II, France attempted to replenish its weakened workforce by recruiting men from the former French colonies of North Africa. In the mid-1970s, the French government relaxed its immigration policy to allow the families of Algerian men to join them. The director has often expressed her desire to recuperate the memories of Algerian women, such as her own mother, who left when she was eighteen. At the opening scene of departure, when Zouina leaves Algeria, torn between her mother's heart-breaking appeal ("don't leave me"), and the advice provided by her sister ("go with your children"), Benguigui chooses to recount the trauma of immigration and exile, "not through the eyes of men, as in second generation *beur* films of the 1980s and 1990s, but from a female perspective."<sup>11</sup>

The film presents a conscious effort to establish a connection between French and francophone African immigrant communities. Following Homi Bhabha's description, "[w]e find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion",<sup>12</sup> I would like to explore the extent to which the film represents an "in-between" or hybrid Franco-African experience. Through imagery and metaphor, Benguigui challenges French hegemonic representations of peoples of African descent and France's representations of its own culture and identity.

The hybrid nature of Zouina's experience starts with the title of the film itself, which mixes two languages as well as two religious practices. This same notion applies to the different characters: in the construction of subjectivities, the idea of authenticity belongs to an obsolete past which only causes misery and stagnation, whereas the ability to adapt and change according to new positions propitiates our identification with the protagonist. Characters in the film can be divided into three groups. The first one includes Madame Donze, the French neighbour, Aïcha, the mother-in-law, and Malika, another Algerian woman who has been living in France for the past fifteen years.

Madame Donze is the next-door neighbour, who, along with her husband, is desperately obsessed with winning the competition awarded to the most beautiful garden. She represents the stagnation of the French middle-class, who has remained attached to old habits and does not appreciate any fluid transformation in their lives. The beauty of the garden requires the encyclopaedic knowledge of the old erudition which has to be found in old and dusty manuals, as well as the tranquillity and the daily cares of the couple. Immobility and surveillance are equally essential to assure the preservation of the garden. To her horror, the arrival of the

<sup>11</sup> Maryse Fauvel, "Yamina Benguigui's 'Inch'Allah dimanche': Unveiling Hybrid Identities," *Studies in French Cinema* 4:2 (2004): 148.

<sup>12</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 7.

noisy Algerian family jeopardises her chances of winning the prize. She literally sees the invader, the barbarian and the potential danger posed by this woman and her children, who destroy her quiet haven with their noise, their laughter and their games. As Maryse Fauvel says: "Their cooking odours and exotic clothing disturb their tranquillity and their version of Frenchness."<sup>13</sup> It is possible to extend such notion even further, and apply Slavoj Žižek's idea suggested in the article "Enjoy the Nation as Yourself," in which he applies his metaphor of enjoyment to explain the formulation of a national identity: "In short, what bothers us about the 'other' is the peculiar way he organizes his enjoyment, precisely the surplus, the 'excess' that pertains to this way: the smell of 'their' food, 'their' noisy songs and dances, 'their' strange manners, 'their' attitude to work."<sup>14</sup>

It is not by coincidence that Madame Donze constantly uses a legalistic approach when voicing her complaints. When Zouina attempts to prepare the coffee in the yard, Madame Donze cries: "You don't have the right to do this here." Madame Donze reproduces what has been the assimilative discourse which the French government has traditionally favoured over integration. As Emmanuel Ma Mung explains, the integration of foreigners has been and still is thought of as the integration of future nationals rather than the integration into society of people who retain their foreign character, and adds: "The foreigner is tolerated only on condition that he/she disappears – not physically by returning to his/her country of origin, for example –, but one could say, semantically, by abandoning his/her foreign character."<sup>15</sup> Madame Donze reminds the Algerian family that they are in France now, and they should behave according to the regulations of the Frenchness that they represent.

Aïcha, the mother-in-law, is similarly drawn to the past and the authenticity of her Algerian culture. She is there to perpetuate Algerian traditions and customs: she sits in a sheepskin on the ground, waits for her daughter-in-law to serve her, prays, and never leaves the house. Among her functions, she must prevent Zouina to mingle with the French community. In sum, as Fauvel puts it, "[s]he is an Algerian guarantee against integration in France."<sup>16</sup> She is the one in charge of the household; from the very beginning she addresses the immigration officers and greets her son without letting Zouina intervene in either occasion. Malika is similar in her preservation of past traditions and customs.

<sup>13</sup> Maryse Fauvel, "Yamina Benguigui's 'Inch'Allah dimanche': Unveiling Hybrid Identities," *Studies in French Cinema* 4:2 (2004):154.

<sup>14</sup> Slavoj Žižek, "Enjoy the Nation as Yourself," in *Theories of Race and Racism: A Reader*, ed. Les Back and John Solomon (London: Routledge, 2000), 596.

<sup>15</sup> Emmanuel Ma Mung, "French Immigration Policy during the Last Twenty Years," in *Immigration in Europe: Issues, Policies and Case Studies*, ed. David Turton and Julia González (Bilbao: University of Deusto, 2003), 113-4.

<sup>16</sup> Fauvel, "Yamina Benguigui's 'Inch'Allahdimanche": 152.

The second group of characters is formed by French citizens who defy stereotypes. They include Nicole, the divorced neighbour, the shopkeepers, the policeman and the bus-driver. They are all open to dialogue and do not reject the immigrant family because of their differences. “Zouina acts as a catalyst for the evolving identities of other characters, identities that move outside of fixed categories and hierarchies that assume the existence of essential fixed identities.”<sup>17</sup> Through them, the film illustrates the articulation of hybrid cultures that occur when identity norms are displaced between diverse groups.

Zouina represents the third group. Unlike the other Algerian women, she does not stay cloistered at home, isolated from the outside world. Moreover, she quickly becomes a member of the community of neighbours. She defies her husband’s authority by going out on Sundays when he is choosing a lamb for the celebrations. She is curious about the world around her: she listens to the radio, imitates the French shoppers and takes the bus alone. This provokes the anger of her mother-in-law, who says: “La France lui a tournée la tête. Elle veut faire comme les Françaises.” (“France has gone to her head. She wants to act like the French.”) Such an accusation is only partly true, since the young woman negotiates her identity by adopting certain characteristics of French women without renouncing her own culture. She feels that what Nicole proposes, to go out alone dancing, is still a sin, but talks to Malika (to her horror) about love and sexuality, which she has learnt about from listening to the radio. The tensions between the different aspects of her subjectivity are visually translated by two types of spaces and shots. The imprisonment that she experiences in closed spaces, such as the house and the yard, is transmitted through close-medium shots, framed by the door and the windows, whereas the freedom she experiences outdoors is filmed through long shots in open spaces. In the final scene, after her illusion of finding a soul-mate is shattered, she realises that she urgently needs to re-arrange her family situation. She imposes her new will on her husband, and for the first time, exchanges a direct look with him and tells her mother-in-law to keep quiet and to leave her alone. Her new resolution, “[f]rom now on I will be the one to take the children to school,” is but a small step in a long-term liberation plan, and with that perspective the film closes. The film goes beyond the mere portrayal of Zouina and her family and insists on the need to expose a new in-process situation regarding national identities for France and other European countries, a situation which is aptly described by Ma Mung: “Immigrants are now increasingly demanding multiple belonging, not being *either* from here *or* over there, but from here *and* over there. Integration can no longer aim at incorporation into the nation French-style.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.: 155.

<sup>18</sup> Ma Mung, “French Immigration Policy,” 124.

### *Gegen die Wand*

Regarding the film *Gegen die Wand*, authors such as Fatih Akin, according to David Coury, celebrate the diversity within Germany and through that diversity help re-define German identity and the identity of German film. Coury adds:

Akin, himself a Turkish-German filmmaker, makes films that reflect what Roland Robertson has termed the 'glocal', that is, films spatially grounded in a local milieu (combining the global and the local, in this case the neighbourhoods of Hamburg), that thematically take up global themes, quite often the 'clash' of cultures between Germans, Turks and the in-between spaces negotiated by Turkish-Germans like himself.<sup>19</sup>

Since the film has received both critical and commercial success, and many aspects of the film have been sufficiently analysed, I will restrict my remarks here to a brief commentary on the hybrid and fluid nature of the characters and spaces depicted in the film, and the notion of multilingualism. The protagonists of the film, Sibel and Cahit, meet for the first time in a psychiatric clinic, after having tried to commit suicide; this is the beginning of a passionate love story marked by longing, loneliness and loss, but especially by two German characters of Turkish descent portrayed as dislocated subjectivities in a constantly fluid motion. They locate themselves in such liminal places as hospitals and hotels (where part of the action takes place), and their efforts to build a real home are frequently destroyed by their own restlessness. The movie, as Karin Lornsen underscores, stresses the dissimilarity of the two main characters, Sibel and Cahit, who appear polymorphic and antagonistic despite a shared Turkish heritage, and adds: "Their differences in age, gender, language ability, social ties, and interests erode widespread notions of a uniform, maladjusted post-migrant entity promoted by German media."<sup>20</sup> Lornsen classifies characters in the film as German-German (G-G), German-Turkish (G-T), Turkish-German (T-G) and Turkish-Turkish (T-T). The second letter represents a switching (on any kind) to another culture, and the G-T and T-G categories encompass hybrid characters. This group, which characterises the protagonists, "opposes conventions of either/or choices as well as a simple intermediate position."<sup>21</sup> In fact, Sibel and Cahit are constantly in transit, between life and death, leaving homes and cities, switching languages, changing clothes and modifying habits,

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<sup>19</sup> David Coury, "Contemporary German Cinema through the Lens of Cultural Studies," in *Basque/European Perspectives on Cultural and Media Studies*, ed. María Pilar Rodríguez (Reno: Center for Basque Studies, University of Nevada, 2009), 288.

<sup>20</sup> Karin Lornsen, "Where Have All the Guest Workers Gone? Transcultural Role-Play and Performative Identities in Fatih Akin's 'Gegen die Wand' (2004)," in *Finding the Foreign: Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Interdisciplinary German Studies Conference*, ed. Robert Schechtman and Suin Roberts (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 14.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 17.

hairstyles and drug and alcohol addictions. Sibel seeks freedom from her Turkish cultural heritage to end up returning to a certain kind of domesticity and order in Istanbul after many excesses. Her final decision to remain with his family rather than leave with Cahit very much contradicts her initial statements and actions in Hamburg, where instant pleasure and gratification prevailed. Both characters- experience multiple physical and psychological transformations along the film, which respond to the different shades of cultural expression which they experience.

Lora Markova claims that to a great extent the representation of multilingualism in European cinema corresponds to the portrayal of transcultural identities and reflects European *transnational hybridity*; she mentions Fatih Akin as one of the best representatives of such tendency.<sup>22</sup> In this film, linguistic shifts are an organic part of the plot and the characters that he constructs. In *Gegen die Wand*, the characters speak in German, Turkish and English; and in a combination of them. Some characters always speak one language with one another, while others alternate them. Sibel and her brother speak only Turkish with their parents, but use a mixture of German and Turkish with each other; Sibel speaks in German with Cahit, but there are two very relevant moments in the film in which English is used by Cahit; in both of them he is liminally positioned by the spatial configuration and by his interlocutor. In similar terms, the soundtrack is composed of both diegetic and non-diegetic American, Turkish and European music; as in the dialogues, there are song lyrics in English, Turkish, and German. After Niko's death (Sibel's lover accidentally killed by Cahit, who is subsequently imprisoned), Turkish music is more frequently played by Sibel, anticipating her move to Istanbul in the second part of the film.<sup>23</sup>

## Conclusion

In these films, as in many others, the audience is confronted with a multi-layered reality formed by transcultural characters in which multilingualism is a constant presence. The efforts by Angela Merkel and other political leaders to encourage assimilation and to encourage monolingualism by the compulsory and urgent need to learn the local language appear as an oversimplification in a world in motion, in which hybridity reveals itself as a much more effective strategy. Against political and institutional discourses, cinematic practices offer the viewers a dialogue about the social and cultural fabric of societies across the world which revitalises the

<sup>22</sup> Lora Markova, "Falling in Love in English: On the Representation of Multilingualism in Contemporary European Cinema," unpublished paper.

<sup>23</sup> For an excellent and detailed analysis of the soundtrack in the film, which includes a very perceptive reading of the musical interludes, see Deniz Göktürk, "Sound Bridges: Transnational Mobility as Ironic Melodrama," in *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Daniela Berghahn and Claudia Sternberg (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 215-34.



concept of European film and makes us aware of our own involvement and participation in present European societies.

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# Envisaging Transcultural Realities through Literature in Europe

## The Case of Ireland

Asier Altuna-García de Salazar

### Introduction

“Mapping Ireland’s future is even more difficult because so many of the old landmarks have disappeared,” states Fintan O’Toole in his 2010 *Enough is Enough. How to Build a New Republic*.<sup>1</sup> O’Toole ponders how Irish identity has become an orphan of its main pillars – “twin towers” he names them: Catholicism and nationalism.<sup>2</sup> Besides, in the Ireland of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as Michael Cronin states, terms which were previously attached to the reality of Ireland, such as anomalous, different, exceptional, do not seem to stand the test any longer.<sup>3</sup> But what is meant by that? Compared to other European countries, Ireland has not been affected differently by the *new* economic, social, cultural and identitarian discourses that have emerged and are still being reformulated on the island as a response to globalisation. The exceptionality of the reversal of the stigmatising Irish emigration pattern into net immigration, the miraculous economic boom of the Irish *Celtic Tiger* in the global economy, the “heartfelt Irish *céad míle fáilte* – one hundred thousand welcomes” to all by Irish President Mary McAleese<sup>4</sup>, which represents indeed an extensive belief in the “politics of recognition” and a “new pluralist agenda”<sup>5</sup> in Irish society before recession and the bail-out, all these seem to avert a changing Ireland which is undergoing the end of monoculturalism.<sup>6</sup> More importantly, this new Ireland is experiencing an attendant “shift” and “opening-out” of concepts such as identity, eth-

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<sup>1</sup> Fintan O’Toole, *Enough is Enough: How to Build a New Republic* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Cronin, “Small Worlds and Weak Ties: Ireland in the New Century,” *Journal of Irish Studies* 22 (2007): 63-93.

<sup>4</sup> Elisa Joy White, “‘You’re Very Welcome’: Considering the African Diaspora, Race and Human Rights in the Republic of Ireland,” *Journal of Irish Studies* 24 (2009): 15-26.

<sup>5</sup> Gerard Delanty, “Irish Political Community in Transition,” *The Irish Review* 33 (2005): 17.

<sup>6</sup> Marion Banks, “Modern Ireland: Multinationals and Multiculturalism,” *Information Society and Justice* 2.1 (2008): 63-93.

nicity, culture and nationalism.<sup>7</sup> What this article will address is what Michael Cronin terms as the “shift from *extrinsic alterity* to *intrinsic alterity*,”<sup>8</sup> when concepts such as identity, ethnicity and culture are examined. For Cronin, by doing so the critic of any culture – the Irish one in our case under study – would pay greater attention to “those elements within the culture that speak of contact with the wider world rather than seeing foreignness, difference or alterity as elements without, or external to, the culture.”<sup>9</sup> This article will analyse how new realities are envisaged in current Irish literature. It will follow very much Wolfgang Iser’s approach to transculturalism in its two main levels: the macro level in which contemporary cultures are “multiply characterized by *hybridization*”;<sup>10</sup> but, especially, the process of transculturalism at the micro level of individuals in today’s Europe as it can be seen in Irish writing.

For many, an inter- and multicultural Ireland was the plausibly *politically correct* current picture to be projected to the world. The myriad of peoples, national affiliations, cultures and languages that have coloured the Emerald Isle over the last two decades have made it possible for many to assert that “multicultural Ireland is here to stay.”<sup>11</sup> However, time has shown that issues such as multiculturalism and even interculturalism do not seem to have provided a valid answer for the emerging realities in Europe, as the public statements and reactions by German Chancellor Angela Merkel or French President Nicholas Sarkozy attest. With a perspective of two decades, the same can be said of Ireland when these concepts are thoroughly analysed. Gavan Titley highlights that, whereas in the case of Ireland multiculturalism seemed to provide a *cosy* way of managing cultural difference – as in many other European countries one would add –, there was no real examination of the assumption that cultures and identities are not static, and that social synergies and dynamism in a global age were producing new social, identitarian and even national discourses.<sup>12</sup> In truth, Ireland has not been any different or anomalous in this respect. Titley sees culture as a “free-floating signifier,” which “has become the main rhetoric through which debates over identity, belonging, legitimacy and entitlement are refracted.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Todd, “Trajectories of Identity Change: New Perspectives on Ethnicity, Nationality and Identity in Ireland,” *Field Day Review* 3 (2007): 107–17.

<sup>8</sup> Cronin, “Small Worlds”: 70.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Wolfgang Iser, “On the Acquisition and Possession of Commonalities,” in *Transcultural English Studies: Theories, Fictions, Realities*, ed. Frank Schulze-Engler and Sissy Helf (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), 7.

<sup>11</sup> Banks, “Modern Ireland”: 90.

<sup>12</sup> Gavan Titley, “Everything Moves? Beyond Culture and Multiculturalism in Irish Public Discourse,” *The Irish Review* 31 (2004): 14.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*: 13.

The purpose of this article is to consider, through the analysis of some instances of Irish literature, how a transcultural individual can be envisaged in today's Ireland. Ultimately, this analysis of transculturalism at the micro level will question the validity of a traditionally staunch Irish monoculturalism and the belief of an eternally fixed Irish identity. At macro social, cultural and political levels, transculturalism is finding it difficult to establish its meaning and scope not only in Ireland and Europe but also in the wider world. From the topical concepts of *us* and the *other*, there arises not only the need to address how national, nationalist, postnational and transnational realities can be envisaged, but, also, how those former pillars of Irishness referred to above are transgressed, reformed and newly accommodated. The brief analysis of writings by Irish writers Roddy Doyle, Margaret McCarthy and Hugo Hamilton, which dwell on issues such as dysfunction, dislocation, trauma, cultural and linguistic awareness, will highlight the portrayal of a transcultural Irish reality that is no disconnected or hybrid conglomerate of features. Instead, these instances address transculturalism in Ireland at the macro and micro levels and represent an exemplar of a current social, cultural and identitarian phenomenon that finds expression in literature at a European level. This article will approach how transculturalism, which is very much here to stay, represents a synergy, an interaction and an evolutionary process within the social, the political, the cultural and identitarian macro and micro discourses intrinsic to an Ireland in the era of globalisation.

### How Irish Should You Be? "The Fáilte Score"

Approaching nationality and monoculturalism in 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland shows how inadequate methods and myths from the past are. What once were the main checklist features of Irish nationality do not seem to stand the test any longer. As former Irish President Mary McAleese stated in her foreword to a booklet on multiculturalism north and south of the border, "we are gradually moving away from the homogeneity and old certainties which have traditionally been the hallmarks of Irish life."<sup>14</sup> But this is no anomalous development as such; rather, it is the confirmation that 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland participates in globalisation and, as Gerard Delanty states, that "the *Global Ireland* points to a conception [...] different from *National Ireland*."<sup>15</sup> The global character of Irish society and economy, together with immigration patterns that have opened the island to a myriad of languages, traditions and cultures, as it is the case with other neighbouring European countries, have fostered a new way of defining nationality. Far from being the imagined or invented results of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century ethnic and national constructions and the *Irish Ire-*

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<sup>14</sup> Mary McAleese, "Foreword," in *Multi-Culturalism: The View from the Two Irelands*, ed. Edna Longley and Declan Kiberd (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), viii.

<sup>15</sup> Delanty, "Irish Political Community": 13.

*land drive* of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or the product of the somewhat static and isolated multicultural discourses, today's Irish nationality exudes transculturalism. Roddy Doyle's short story "57% Irish" was first published in the multicultural online and paper magazine *Metro Éireann* and then collected and released in book format under the title of *The Deportees and Other Stories* (2007). Doyle's stories reflect a concern for the ensemble of diversity in Ireland. "57% Irish" represents a serious fictional exemplar of the need to deconstruct – so as to better comprehend – an *Irish-only* consciousness. With Doyle's humour throughout, the story approaches the very futile definition of Irish nationhood and citizenship in terms of percentage. It shows how those check-list features of what being Irish traditionally stood for cannot be valid any longer. The main task of the protagonist, Ray Brady, is to design a method to measure nationality. Awarded a research grant for his project "Olé Olé Olé – Football and the Road to Irishness," his goal is to measure *love of country* in today's Ireland.<sup>16</sup> Ray's research reaches a turning point when he is required by the Minister for the Arts and Ethnicity (ironically the former Minister for the Arts and Tourism) "to make it harder to be Irish" although Ray has to "make it look easier." The reason behind the Irish government's interest is to comply with Europeanisation, or, as the Minister stated, "Fucking Europe." European ministers are "not happy with the Fortress Europe tag. It keeps them from their sleep. So, the walls are coming down."<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, Ray Brady creates a measuring tool to indicate the proper level of Irishness: "The Fáilte Score." But what could be the items to ask for at a time when everyone knows more about Irish culture than ever before because of global Ireland and the commodification of Irish culture? This was the real issue for a quiz on Irishness to be designed: U2, James Joyce, Guinness, *Riverdance*, Brian Boru, the Irish Tenors, the GAA centenary tape, *The Best of Eurovision*, the Pope's mass in Galway, *The Commitments*, even *Anal Nation*, *Once Again*, an instance of Irish porn<sup>18</sup>, are all burnt onto one CD and then exposed to various individuals strapped to a chair and screened thoroughly to measure and record any reaction to those items; a repository of Irishness in 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland. The results puzzle Ray Brady. His brother's score, 19%, turns out to be a failure; he could not even be considered Irish. His mother scores only 38%; even the Minister gets a 57%, "a feckin' C minus,"<sup>19</sup> the Minister retorts; the average mark, Ray replies, which makes the Minister the "average Irishman." But his experiment also provides the highest score of all, 97%, "the most Irish man in the country": a Ghanaian. Even Ray's Russian girlfriend scored 83%. Far from being dislocated or "the other," these newcomers to Ireland do not feel "strangers in their own country." Originally designed to hamper the naturalisation of deportees,

<sup>16</sup> Roddy Doyle, *The Deportees and Other Stories* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), 101.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 109-10.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

exiles and immigrants, Ray's test proves otherwise. Eventually, the Irish government of the story could not handle the results nor Irish ethnicity any longer and decided to merge the ethnicity component of the new ministry with the Department of the Marine. Doyle's "57% Irish" represents a clear stance of the lack of validity of former constructs and pillars of Irish identity. Besides, he poignantly denounces the failure of the governmental institutions (the macro level) in understanding and accepting the reality of the new Irish nation (the individuals at the micro level); a reality that can neither be acculturated nor assimilated. In this vein, Doyle's portrayal advocates the necessity of re-shuffling identitarian and national discourses and validating the politics of recognition and pluralism of 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland so as to extend a wider acceptance of citizenship, both in cultural and political terms, as it is the case with many other nations in Europe nowadays.

These new discourses are here to stay and have come to blur and redefine the idea of "the nation-state and the distinctiveness of individual societies."<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Doyle's "57% Irish" represents not only an attempt to categorise new concepts that may enable the approach to these new realities but also the necessity to do away with what Yolanda Onghena terms as the fear to refer to "diversity as some sort of disturbing *other*, an intruder with the capacity to destabilise our security,"<sup>21</sup> i.e. our solid and monolithic monocultures. To overcome this fear, Ireland should come to terms with the recognition of transculturalism as the very opposite response to static, solid monocultures and fixed identities and see it as a useful tool for the recognition of identity reformulation processes.

### **"This is why I say there is no in-between state"**

In the introduction to *My Eyes Only Look Out*, Margaret McCarthy states that she believes that at the outset of the Millennium and in the cases of race and immigration in Ireland, "it is difficult to predict the future beyond speculation and careful optimism."<sup>22</sup> McCarthy advocates that, "despite the disproportionate amount of attention that has been focused on the arrival of asylum seekers and other immigrants," Ireland still seems to remain "more or less monocultural."<sup>23</sup> Her collection summarises overall reactions to a hyphenated reality (Irish-something or something-Irish), nationhood, patriotism, nationalism and language accent. McCarthy collects thus reactions produced by the protagonists of the accounts as well as by those who surround them in a volume that points to transculturalism, showing the failure of the much-celebrated multicultural mosaic and inter-culturality, of which

<sup>20</sup> G. Honor Fagan, "Globalization and Culture: Placing Ireland," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 581 (2002): 134.

<sup>21</sup> Yolanda Onghena, "Transculturalism and Relation Identity", *Quaderns de la Mediterrània* 31 (2008): 182.

<sup>22</sup> Margaret McCarthy, *My Eyes Only Look Out* (Dingle: Brandon, 2001), 10.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

these mixed-race Irish are the most evident result. Among the many accounts we find Luzveminda O'Sullivan's, crowned Rose of Tralee in August 1998, Seán Óg's, Gaelic football and hurling star, Ian's, the first coloured guard in Ireland, or Curtis Fleming's, a black Irishman football player for Middlesbrough and Crystal Palace. Proud of their Irishness through their personal accounts – which recollect trauma, dysfunction and cultural awareness – these Irish reject *in-betweenness*, which for some is nonexistent as it is only a facile reduction of their physical appearance and place of birth. These Irish are what Welsch terms cultural hybrids which are neither determined nor defined by a single nation,<sup>24</sup> nor by culture, one would add.

Most of these biographical instances exude a transcultural stance in which to define a new arena for analysis. But their responses also show the difficulty faced by these Irish in coming to terms with their, let's say, *internal and external alterity*. Even if they are and feel truly Irish, in order to find self-esteem in society they have to resort to answers such as "I'm International,"<sup>25</sup> I'm Irish "even though I don't look it,"<sup>26</sup> I am "no in-between state,"<sup>27</sup> "to me, there is no middle ground"<sup>28</sup> and "there is something out there for me."<sup>29</sup> Others are deeply concerned by their constant need to succeed more than what is usually expected, as people are always watching and assessing them. McCarthy denounces the failure of assimilative acculturation in Ireland, as it is the case in other European nations. Instead, these accounts exude transculturalism so as to reformulate the foundations of Irish society. These accounts advocate, as Onghena states, that "a new, composite and complex reality emerges; a reality that is no mechanical mixture of characters, nor mosaic, but instead a new original and independent phenomenon."<sup>30</sup> McCarthy envisages the representation of this transcultural reality and synergy as a way to promote the interaction and commonalities Welsch demands from a future transcultural society in Europe and also in the wider world.<sup>31</sup>

### **From "walking on the wall" to "I can feel the touch of solid ground under my feet"**

As a final instance, this article will briefly consider Hugo Hamilton's novels *The Speckled People* (2003) and *The Sailor in the Wardrobe* (2006). The novels are biographical accounts of Hamilton's own, somewhat dysfunctional, childhood and youth.

<sup>24</sup> Wolfgang Welsch, "Transculturalism – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today," in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 194–213.

<sup>25</sup> McCarthy, *My Eyes*, 111.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>30</sup> Onghena, "Transculturalism": 183.

<sup>31</sup> Welsch, "On the Acquisition," 33.



Although born in Dublin, the young Hamilton's world is characterised by entanglement at many levels: personal, cultural and linguistic. Hamilton's father is a staunch Irish nationalist, who shamefully hides in his wardrobe a father's past in the British army and wants his children to speak only Irish and live in Gaelic culture. His mother, on the other hand, is a German immigrant who has escaped from a Nazi past, and talks to them only in German, not wanting her children to forget their German ancestry. The young Hugo Hamilton, addressed as Hanno in the novels, wants to be free to choose between cultures and languages, desiring at times to speak English, the language of connection to a world of popular culture and modernity; but only in his mind can he be free, as "you're still free to go anywhere you like inside your own head."<sup>32</sup> His transcultural individuality clashes with a social discourse, a macro level, as he does not want to be special: "out there in Ireland you want to be the same as everyone else, not an Irish speaker, not a German or a Kraut or a Nazi."<sup>33</sup> For Hamilton, his is not a special but a new reality that is appearing in Ireland. His is a synergy into the social, the cultural and identitarian:

My father says we have nothing to worry about because we are the new Irish. Partly from Ireland and partly from somewhere else, half-Irish and half-German. We're the speckled people, he says, the 'brack' people, which is a word that comes from the Irish language, from the Gaelic as they sometimes call it. My father was a schoolteacher once before he became an engineer and *breac* is a word, he explains, that the Irish people brought with them when they were crossing over into the English language. It means speckled, dappled, flecked, spotted, coloured. A trout is brack and so is a speckled horse. A barm brack is a loaf of bread with raisins in it and was borrowed from the Irish words *bairín breac*. So we are the speckled Irish, the brack-Irish. Brack home-made Irish bread with German raisins.<sup>34</sup>

But Hamilton wants to depart from a hyphenated reality and be truly transcultural, so as to understand and comprehend cultures beyond one's own cultural construction and that of the other. The young Hanno's world progresses from the inner security of his dysfunctional home (Irish and German *only*) where he can be himself and out there, where "there is a different country."<sup>35</sup> His "you can't love two countries"<sup>36</sup>, exclaimed under his father's influence, turns into doubt about his own identity and nationality. At the end of *The Speckled People*, Hanno comes to the

<sup>32</sup> Hugo Hamilton, *The Speckled People* (London: Fourth State, 2003), 122.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

understanding that “maybe your country is only a place you make up in your own mind”<sup>37</sup> and he decides to walk metaphorically on the wall of identity, most probably knowing that he could fall on either side, but nobody can stop him and he is intent on going ahead.

Hamilton begins his second novel pondering on *the original sin* we are all born with, i.e. your inheritance in terms of identity, historical past, language. Hamilton does not believe we are born innocent. Instead, he follows his mother’s wise words and has to earn his own innocence; Hanno has to “grow up and become innocent.”<sup>38</sup> His identity construction process undergoes deconstruction to start anew. He has to *un-remember* everything. To live transculturally, a partial deculturation paves the way to new cultural phenomena.<sup>39</sup> Hamilton surpasses English, Irish and German to become himself. What is central for him is not staunchly differentiated mosaic diversity but merging and interaction. Hamilton decides he is “not going to be kept in the wardrobe”<sup>40</sup> and *un-becomes* his threefold identities, thus becoming transcultural. The young Hanno becomes fully himself and participates in a discourse that frees him from staunchly monolingualistic and monocultural frameworks, thus allowing him to communicate freely around meanings, languages and cultures. From “walking on the wall” Hanno feels now “the touch of solid ground under [his] feet”<sup>41</sup> at the end of his second novel. He transcends all the static systems of reference and turns into a transcultural citizen of the world.

Transculturalism together with cosmopolitanism in the political and community spheres are the alternatives to staunch positions of the past, both in Ireland and the rest of Europe. As Delanty argues, “one can simultaneously be Irish, European and member of an ethnic community” if one’s identity is “articulated through discursively mediated identities and critical dialogue.”<sup>42</sup> What is at stake when identities, and the Irish one in particular for our case here, are reformulated is the *trans*-concept. Whether transnational or transcultural identities at the *micro* level and nations at the *macro* level are being reformulated, always bearing in mind the essence of *free-floating signifiers*, transformation and *intrinsic alterity*. In the end, “a new social imaginary is needed, that will question who participates in what, how and why.”<sup>43</sup> In today’s Europe, transculturalism seems the answer to “the moribund ideology of the nation-state.”<sup>44</sup> As with the case of Ireland analysed here, Europe

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 295.

<sup>38</sup> Hugo Hamilton, *The Sailor in the Wardrobe* (London: Harper Perennial, 2006), 1.

<sup>39</sup> Onghena, “Transculturalism”: 182.

<sup>40</sup> Hamilton, *The Sailor*, 110.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 263.

<sup>42</sup> Delanty, “Irish Political Community”: 21.

<sup>43</sup> Onghena, “Transculturalism”: 184.

<sup>44</sup> Graham Huggan, “Postcolonialism, Globalization, and the Rise of (Trans)cultural Studies,” in *Towards a Transcultural Future. Literature and Society in a “Post”-colonial World*, ed. Geoffrey V. Davis et. al. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004), 31.

should also advocate the reformulation of identity, culture and a new social order under a transcultural prism.

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# Transcultural Encounters in Re-Inscribing Identity European Memories and Ethnic Writing in Canada

Anna Pia De Luca

## Introduction

In the light of new migrant literary studies, concepts of transculturality and transculturalism, according to Sabrina Broncato, contribute to an awareness of “the processes of formation of cultural identity in all of their complexity,” because they “place emphasis on the dialectical nature of cultural influences, in tending towards a conceptualisation of interaction where nothing is ever completely ‘other’ (foreign and unknown).”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, as underlined by Welsch, transculturality implies “a culture and society whose pragmatic feats exist not only in delimitation, but in the ability to link and undergo transition.”<sup>2</sup> Within this framework of mobility, transformation and cultural interaction, cultural identities resist any form of fixity and become fluid, pliable and open to redefinition and reconstruction. By attempting to understand transculturalism as framework, the purpose of this paper is to analyse the ways in which the inscription and contextualisation of ethnic identity (and European memory) is achieved and represented in migrant literary writings in Canada.

In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to officially adopt a multiculturalism policy. The term multicultural dates back to the 1970 report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, arriving in 1988 with the passing of Bill C 93, known as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. The Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding. The mapping of a Canadian identity, in constant flux as a result of Canada’s kaleidoscope of multicultural, multiracial and multilingual enclaves, has generated a polyphonic literature in which the so-called ‘ethnic’

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<sup>1</sup> Sabrina Broncato, “‘Glocality’ and Cultural Identity,” *This Century’s Review* 4 (2006), <http://history.thiscenturysreview.com/glocality.html> (accessed 9 January 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today,” in *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, Work*, ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash (London: Sage, 1999), 200.

writers can give voice not only to personal perspectives of displacement and alienation but above all to new and original literary forms which underline their cross-cultural experiences such as communication with alterity, plurilinguism, self-translation, autobiography, myth and intertextual symbolism, which interact with what Frank Schulze-Engler defines as “the transcultural imaginary”<sup>3</sup> of our modern global world.

The main frame of reference found in Canadian ethnic minority texts is the recurrent shift between cultures, and as their juxtaposition frequently intimates, the characters find themselves on the borderline of conflicting loyalties, which often creates a sense of helplessness and anxiety. These shifting perspectives, which foreground the multiplicity and ambiguity of identity, are often reflected through an irony which both cultivates and exposes differences and contradictions. In this way, irony becomes a destabilising factor to avoid the affixation of a single particular meaning to the events depicted in the texts. In *Splitting Images*, a critical study on ethnic literature, Linda Hutcheon in fact affirms: “Irony is one way of coming to terms with this kind of duplicity, for it is the trope that incarnates doubleness.”<sup>4</sup> Second-generation writers analyse the difficulties faced by immigrant parents who were socially marginalised in a new world where the language was alien, but in particular where it had created a generational gap between parents and children in conflict over the diversity of cultural views and speaking languages. For these children, the private space of the family, which includes relatives and villagers, becomes a battlefield for their own physical and emotional struggles, and the public sphere, with its social pressures from peer groups, becomes the space for conflicts inherent in a definition of identity, always in tension between new and old world values and where concepts such as displacement, dislocation and confrontation are often reiterated. The authors are placed on the threshold of both worlds where they reveal those asymmetric dualisms that characterise their daily living.

### Cross-cultural Spaces of Food

In defining ethnic and cultural spaces, literature has always assigned to food an interesting and significant role, in particular to the very act of eating a meal which can generate a series of values that range from the social to the human. Besides giving nourishment to the body, food can take on an infinite number of meanings. For immigrants, the sharing of food underlines the cultural and ethnic identity of the family and its cross-cultural experiences in the new world. Thus the dishes that revolve around immigrant tables have an aura of historical memories of their home communities, of rituals, values, beliefs and also their transformations in the new

<sup>3</sup> Frank Schulze-Engler, “Transnationale Kultur als Herausforderung für die Literaturwissenschaft,” *ZAA: Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 50.1 (2002): 79.

<sup>4</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *Splitting Images: Contemporary Canadian Ironies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 49.

world. As underlined by Enoch Padolsky, food has long been regarded as a useful and important ethnic marker, particularly in terms of identity issues.<sup>5</sup> From an ethnic perspective, the assumption has been that one's identity can be induced from the foods that significantly reflect an ethnic language, culture, history, tradition and religion. However, if food locates us geographically and physically, it also locates us in specific and sometimes limited cultural spaces that, from a cross-cultural perspective, can be either very satisfying or very ambivalent.

For authors such as Fred Wah, a writer born in Canada of Chinese, Scottish, Irish and Swedish hybrid roots, food becomes a powerful narrative and symbolic element. In his biographical memoir *Diamond Grill*, the narrative core and setting of the short sections of his larger story is the Chinese restaurant of the same name opened in 1950 in Nelson, British Columbia, by the author's father. From this habitat, where the family works and grows, Wah converts food into a metaphorical medium to explore, through memory, his anxiety and torment caused by an obsessive difficulty in accepting his hybrid ethnic identity. The restaurant becomes a stage where Wah acts out his various identities, while the swinging doorway, which separates the Chinese cooking area at the back from the fundamentally white Canadian dining area in the front, serves as a threshold for that 'in-between' space where Wah's identity is moulded and reshaped. Emblematic are his opening words as he hurries to the kitchen to bring an order to a customer: "I pick up an order and turn, back through the doors, Whap! My foot registers more than its own imprint, starts to read the stain of memory."<sup>6</sup> In this effervescent atmosphere, the Chinese language/culture at the back is tangibly juxtaposed to the one at the front, as Wah audibly and easily moves across the threshold, calling attention not only to his perception of marginalisation and cultural diversity, but at the same time to a capacity to negotiate and understand his own personal ethnicity. In preparing the 'mixed grill,' Wah adds, blends, combines and incorporates different ingredients as he mixes and cooks everything together, thus literally and metaphorically reconstructing a variegated cultural identity in order to gain the self-perception and self-esteem necessary to accept and defend his multiracial and transcultural identity. Thus, in the end, the Diamond Grill restaurant becomes a place of cultural and ethnic discoveries and recoveries, where Wah, as understood by Beaugregard, endeavours "to theorize Canada as a hybrid cultural space",<sup>7</sup> but where hybridity is not a random choice but rather cross-cultural contact.

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<sup>5</sup> Enoch Padolsky, "You Are Where You Eat: Ethnicity, Food and Cross-cultural Spaces," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 37.2 (2005): 19.

<sup>6</sup> Fred Wah, *Diamond Grill* (Edmonton: NeWest, 1996), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Guy Beaugregard, "Rattling a Noisy Hyphen," review of *Diamond Grill*, by Fred Wah, *Canadian Literature* 156 (Spring 1998): 172.

### Language and Doubleness

In the works of many ethnic writers, the relationship between language and doubleness is a recurrent pattern, both on a structural and on a thematic level. The language of the immigrant is often neither idiomatic to his or her homeland nor to his or her host country, but to somewhere in-between. Consequently, in their search for an identity, the immigrants struggle, as it were, with two childhood languages, that of their past and that of their present. But this dichotomy is also often enriching, since many writers mould and come up with different languages and make use of diverse syntactical, semantic and phonological indicators or dialect languages to give voice to their experiences.

Within the context of Italian-Canadian literature, recent works by female writers are of particular interest, firstly because women of Italian descent often had to struggle against class, gender and ethnic status. In addition, living within the constraints of a patriarchal family, they were rarely able to achieve complete emotional and social independence, often relying on the use of subterfuge to elude the role of passive and submissive daughter imposed upon them by a stringent authoritarianism within their ethnic community. Female writers like Gianna Patriarca, Mary di Michel and Genni Gunn experiment with plurilinguistic texts, using Italian or diverse dialects which aim to recuperate a lost language or identity. Patriarca's poetry is fundamentally written in English, but many of her poems reach a finer level of lyricism with her inclusion of Italian titles, words, verses and self-translations, which give emphasis to her linguistic and cultural duplicity.

In mapping the boundaries of Toronto's Little Italy, Patriarca takes on the role of distant female observer, analysing the power relations that take place between men and women, parents and children, young and old, within families, friendships and diverse ethnicities. The spaces her women inhabit are private spaces: those of the kitchen, the basement apartment, the church, a sick room in a hospital, Villa Colombo for the elderly and social clubs in Little Italy where *paesani* (fellow country neighbours) meet to talk and pass their time in female crafts. The main themes of Patriarca's early poetry unfold in her first two collections, *Italian Women and Other Tragedies* and *Daughters for Sale*, where she underlines the conflicts that arise from a patriarchal ideology that seeks, through the mechanisms of female submission, to suffocate even the voices of those who are determined to be heard. Patriarca travels through the past, recalling experiences as an immigrant daughter, stories and anecdotes of family, memories linked to old photographs and letters, but in particular she moves through the collective memories of all those women and children who had suffered at the hands of immigration sponsors without scruples or fathers and husbands too drunk or violent to show any form of compassion.

In the first poem, "Italian Women," which gives the title to the collection, Patriarca offers a double-edged challenge to stereotyped male visions of oppressive Italian women in black. The narrating voice, the *i* (eye) that scrutinises with suffer-



ance, but also with ironic distance, creates an ambiguous tension between *self* and *other*.

these are the women  
who were born to give birth

they breathe only  
leftover air  
and speak only  
when deeper voices  
have fallen asleep

i have seen them bleed  
in the dark  
hiding the stains inside them  
like sins  
apologizing

i have seen them wrap their souls  
around their children  
and serve their own hearts  
in a meal they never  
share.<sup>8</sup>

Patriarca's depiction of the older immigrant women from Italy is one of sympathetic understanding and poignant insight. Some are guilt-ridden and self-effacing women whose dreams of a better life burn in the lit candles offered to marbled saints in local Catholic churches. Her female world view is always bifocal: religious rites are juxtaposed with pagan beliefs, thus we find the pious with the irreverent, saints with devils, the good with the bad, joy with sadness, past with present, but always conditioned by the art of story-telling. In her poems, she is able to metaphorically present the two extremes of a female world based on silence and yearning but also on hope and tenderness. It is the voice of the poet who remembers, protects and transmits with compassion but never with contempt.

Particularly intent are also her poems that tell stories of older women both in Italy and Canada, such as "Paesaggi," where Patriarca affectionately observes an Italian woman left behind, waiting for a husband who has emigrated and who may never return. The shade of her face, like the endless waves that distance her from her husband, are "of fine white marble." And "sun bleached" are also the cobbled stones, where her husband's steps had "left no prints," as if he had never left or had furtively escaped. But like Mariana in the poem by Tennyson, unrelentingly "for a thousand seasons," she waits for him to appear by the gate, "in the morning

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<sup>8</sup> Gianna Patriarca, *Italian Women and Other Tragedies* (Toronto: Guernica, 1994), 9.

/ in the evening / when the rain came / from the ocean into silence.”<sup>9</sup> Though seemingly antithetic, even the fate of the mail-order bride was not dissimilar to that of the women left behind, as can be understood in the poem “Daughters for Sale,” where Rosaria, a widow in a resting home, recalls the period when, after the war, she had married the photograph of a man recognisable “only from the waist up,” “sent from across the ocean,” “a man in an envelope.” She believed that this man was to become her “passport,” her “ticket to paradise.” But now, as she sits alone by the fountain at Villa Colombo and waits for sons too busy to visit her, she remembers only her husband’s “very large hands,” which nonetheless were “not large enough to touch me.” What remains of her life of solitude are her memories of the Sicilian sun and “the way it walked on my flesh / warm like an angel and sometimes with the / fiery steps of a devil,” while, in the virtual spaces of “this perfect garden of cement and wrought iron” constructed to resemble an Italian piazza, she knows that “the sun wears shoes.”<sup>10</sup>

A consideration, at this point, must be made with regards to those writers of second-generation immigrant families who already had a sense of their *Canadian-ness*, but lacked or lost the perception of their *Italianness*. Often the process of re-appropriating their submerged identity occurs after a long postponed return visit to Italy. The theme of the journey, represented in ethnic texts either in autobiographical form or as a metaphor for self-discovery, gives the authors a retrospective view regarding their sense of displacement and becomes the catalyst whereby they can reconsider their immigrant experience and the nature of their identity. Mary di Michele, one of the most prominent Italian-Canadian writers whose works have been anthologised in diverse Canadian mainstream publications, sees such a journey as a *rite de passage* where the spiritual, psychological and cultural consequences are evident in her later works. The power politics of the gaze, which according to feminist critics renders the observed female frustrated and powerless, however, has a double edge in her poems. Throughout her works, di Michele, as the speaking subject, guides the reader into the threshold of perception to observe the poet observing herself. It is the reader who is encouraged to be the voyeur. Films, family snapshots, cameras and mirrors reflect back that desirable *other*, so that the reader’s attention shifts back and forth in a tentative search for truth under the surface of the unreliable narrating voice. The collection *Mimosa*, published in 1981<sup>11</sup>, is a perfect example of this authorial interpolation, where a series of monologues between two sisters in opposition, Marta and Lucy, and an elderly immigrant father, Vito, call into question not only family values and concepts of authority, but above all the emotionally ambivalent feelings each have for the other and which the two

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 12-3.

<sup>10</sup> Gianna Patriarca, *Daughters for Sale* (Toronto: Guernica, 1997), 15-7.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Di Michele, “Mimosa,” in *Mimosa and Other Poems* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press/Valley Editions, 1981), 1-16.

sisters, though not without feelings of guilt, try to explain. The correlation between language and transcultural values permeates much of the poems, while the formal juxtaposition of the three points of view affords a three-dimensional perspective on the experience of immigration and its ensuing sense of fragmentation. The texts are filled with irony, culminating in the fact that while Marta, the obedient and respectful daughter resentfully demanding attention, is not loved by Vito, on the other hand his favourite, Lucia, though a poet, is unable to express her sincere love for him. As underlined by Linda Hutcheon, the title poem is not only “about doubleness and fragmentation, about the ideal and the real, past and present,” but above all through the three points of view, the father’s, Marta’s and Lucia’s, the reader is confronted with how Marta’s overt dependence on hypocrisy “conditions any interpretation”<sup>12</sup> one may have of family relationships. However, it could be argued that the identities of the two sisters seem to fuse to become that of one woman narrating her schizophrenic tension between female desire and filial duty.

### Masking Identities

Unlike Patriarca’s or di Michele’s literary works, those of Genni Gunn<sup>13</sup> are atypical in that Gunn refuses to be labelled as Italian-Canadian with its confining and limiting effects, but prefers rather to assume the mask of a cryptic identity,<sup>14</sup> as eloquently testified both by the choice of camouflaging her real name, Gemma Donati, and her exclusive use of the English language. In her poetic works, in particular, the question of ethnic identity is never the focal point of her attention, just as the transcultural dimension of her writings is never limited to the rescue of the cultural heritage of her Italian origins. Her attention is centred on universal themes, on blending and embracing diverse geographic, psychic and interior spaces in order to create metaphoric sequences and mythological cross-references which establish links – both inter- and transcultural – with the various cultures of the world.

In her most recent collection of poems, *Faceless*, Gunn explores the theme of the mask and its multiple possibilities of exposing the dilemma between being, appearing and regenerating. The genesis of the series of poems in the cycle “Faceless,” which gives the title to the collection, is the amazing chronicle of the first facial transplant carried out in 2005 on a French woman whose dog had disfigured her in its attempts to awaken her from a suicidal sleep induced by an over-dose of

<sup>12</sup> Linda Hutcheon, *Splitting Images*, 58.

<sup>13</sup> The following sections of this paper, regarding the writers Genni Gunn and Janice Kulyk Keefer, were part of a previously published article but which are here shortened and revised. See Anna Pia De Luca, “Migrant Women: Transnational/Transcultural Identities across Borders in Canadian Female Writing,” in *Migration and Fiction: Narratives of Migration in Contemporary Canadian Literature*, ed. Maria Löschnigg and Martin Löschnigg (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2009), 65-7 and 70-1.

<sup>14</sup> The term is taken from an essay by Linda Hutcheon, “A Crypto-Ethnic Confession,” in *The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing*, ed. Joseph Pivato (Toronto: Guernica, 1998), 314-23.

sleeping pills. The traumatic experience of the woman, who awakens with a mangled face, becomes the backdrop for subsequent poems where the poet explores the paradox inherent in hiding behind various masks which shift or change according to the situation or convention. Faceless, she is unable to recognise herself: “without your face / you could be no one.”<sup>15</sup> Even the futile attempt of the woman to camouflage herself under layers of make-up and brand-name clothes in order to be noticed and accepted by others, paradoxically makes her more anonymous and invisible, as evinced by Gunn’s metaphoric and intertextual reference to Hun-Dun, “a faceless bird-like entity, and a representation of Chaos”<sup>16</sup> in Chinese mythology, who eventually died when the gods of the periphery, in trying to create order from chaos, drilled seven holes to restructure his face.

Particularly striking is the final vision of the woman with half a face, like the grotesque statues on display at the Body Worlds exhibit in Los Angeles, statues with skinless bodies:

through which we glimpse the gears  
the turning of our motor hearts  
no wonder we don’t recognize  
our selves without our skins<sup>17</sup>

This vision of self as half, however, initiates a catharsis in the woman who finds herself obliged to put aside her usual disguises and look deep into herself for the first time. By accepting to mask herself behind the transplanted face of another suicidal victim, the woman finally obtains redemption, for she acknowledges that everyone wears multiple masks, masks of self which make us what we are: whole and authentic. As underlined by Deborah Saidero, the parable of the woman without a face, which Gunn presents in these poems, seems particularly relevant to the traumatic experience of the migrant woman, who, because of her geographic, cultural and linguistic dislocation/relocation, finds herself donning a series of diverse masks to protect herself from derision and prejudice.<sup>18</sup> The difficult process of recuperating and reconstructing a new identity, therefore, implies a need to reconsider the restrictive borders of one’s own ethnic condition in wider terms that are both transcultural and interrelated.

<sup>15</sup> Genni Gunn, *Faceless* (Winnipeg: Signature Editions, 2007), 32.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Allen and Chas Saunders, “Hun-Dun: Ancient God of Chaos and Creation,” *The Gods of Chinese Mythology*, <http://www.godchecker.com/pantheon/chinese-mythology.php?deity=HUN-DUN> (accessed 9 January 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Gunn, *Faceless*, 33.

<sup>18</sup> Deborah Saidero, “Le maschere dell’io: identità transculturale nella poesia italo-canadese,” *Oltreoceano* 3 (2009): 88.

### Trauma and Memory

The reliance on narrative devices as memoirs and oral tales is also present in Janice Kulyk Keefer's *The Green Library*, where the chronicling of a half-century of Ukrainian history from 1941 to 1993 and the trauma of dislocation for the DPs who ended up in Canada after the Second World War is achieved through the fragmented reconstruction of Eva Chown's unknown family history, which is gradually disclosed to her as she pieces together the various stories she hears from the people who reappear from her past. In recalling the troubled history of the half-starved DPs who, after the war, were "brought in all the way from Germany, on boats, just like cattle"<sup>19</sup> to work in Canada's lumber camps and, when no longer needed, were dismissed to a life with few possibilities of survival, investigates the 'departure-arrival-return' motif which informs the experience of diaspora and which explores the difficulties and hardships of immigrant assimilation versus the desire to return 'home.' Thus the return journey pattern of this ethnic novel tries to dissipate the haunting obsession with returning to a place which is no longer home but which continues, nevertheless, to hinder the experience of fully belonging in the new nation. Within the novel, the intermingling of private memories and public history undermines the clichés of historical representation and points towards a somewhat mythical approach to history, where meaning exists only in relation to other stories offered by other people in other places and in different times. The relationship between the ordinary and the extraordinary, between the normal and abnormal, functions to undermine the power of historical stereotypes to shape the characters' lives and to debase imposing truths which have been made to appear as normal. When Eva finds the cut-out photo of a boy who strikingly resembles her son Ben, mysteriously slid through her front door, her ordinary life is suddenly disrupted together with her normal identification of herself as Eva Chown, the daughter of a well-off, upper middle-class Torontonion couple. Her descent journey into an unknown and unsuspected past discloses an utterly different and unreal world, constructed upon stories that never tell "the whole truth"<sup>20</sup> and that, at times, modulate almost imperceptibly into lies. Yet, despite her awareness of the inherent fictionality of the stories she hears and the unsanctioned historical documents she reads, it is through these that Eva slowly comes to acknowledge the past as something that inexorably "keeps bleeding into the present and won't be staunched."<sup>21</sup>

As Eva follows the trail of memory and unearths her family secrets and cultural roots, past, present and future fuse, making her the receiver and the bearer not only of the untold and repudiated stories of all those Displaced Persons who immigrated to Canada, leaving their identities behind, but also of those, who, like her

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<sup>19</sup> Janice Kulyk Keefer, *The Green Library* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1996), 49.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 198.

Ukrainian grandmother Lesia Levkovich, were victims of the Nazi suppression of the Ukrainian language and culture, or of those who, in present-day Ukraine, struggle to construct their future after centuries of subjection to Tsarist and Soviet-style imperialism. In addition, by resisting victim/victimizer oppositions, *The Green Library* presents the Ukrainian people as both oppressed and oppressors, thus underlining both the painful and brutal historical events of Ukraine's colonial past and precarious present as well as acknowledging their equally leading role in diffusing anti-Semitism within and outside national borders. In revoking the country's innumerable invasions and conquerors, the author admits the part of responsibility that Ukraine's aristocracy and intellectuals had in starving the peasants to death. In a similar manner, she acknowledges the Ukrainians as collaborators of the Nazis in the persecution of the Jews who were sent off to die at Babyn Yar. The recognition of historical similarities among different peoples, who have ambivalently been both the oppressed and the oppressors, functions to deconstruct savage disagreements and expose the treachery of power relations where victims can turn into victimizers and perpetuate hierarchical relations.

Eva's vertical journey into the past, thus, discloses an important sense of connection with others. Although Eva's physical and psychic journey ultimately leads her to discover the identity of her biological father, a "bohunk"<sup>22</sup> with whom her mother had had a brief affair, it is above all through a host of female characters, which includes her half-senile mother Holly, her parents' former Ukrainian housekeeper Mrs. Moroz, her ex-schoolmate Oksanna and her grandmother Lesia, that she becomes aware both of her identity as a woman and of the importance of her ethnicity for self-definition: "their lives, their stories – she carries them in her bones, in whatever she makes of herself."<sup>23</sup>

## Conclusion

For Canada's many immigrants, the postulation within these many texts of a post-national concept of home has far-reaching consequences, since it enables them to develop a sense of belonging to their Canadian homeland, without obliging them to deny their other homes in the process. Thus a far better logo for Canada's multicultural inhabitants who, like her reference to Janus, "the Roman God of threshold and doorways"<sup>24</sup>, are split between 'here' and 'there,' the new iconographic model proposed by Kulyk Keefer points towards a transcultural experience which challenges the fixed and fragmented separation of the multicultural mosaic and urges the crossing of all borders and boundaries, not only between self and other

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 261.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 12.

or between past and present, but also between the different selves that co-exist within a person's variegated and constantly changing identity.

As a final consideration, the retrieval of a lost cultural heritage and ancestry has enabled these Canadian writers to establish a meaningful sense of connection with the people who had inhabited their adolescent memories. The writing of ethnicity on the part of Canada's writers, which Kulyk Keefer in her article "Coming Across Bones" has fittingly termed "historiographic ethnofiction," involves a personal struggle between the past and the present, history and memory, between stories and real life experiences. Thus writing and reading ethnicity becomes a means to foster comparative awareness and "to acknowledge and explore," as Kulyk Keefer underlines, "the connective differences between us."<sup>25</sup> Here a liminal space of understanding is created and accepted, a space which rejects the stereotypical markers of ethnicity. The re-appropriation of the histories, myths, minority languages and cultures of these hyphenated immigrants aids the process of re-inscribing self and coming to terms with personal identity, which in the Canadian multicultural context is created through borrowings, crossings and repositioning of boundaries that once marked difference but now offer infinite possibilities of creative transcultural identity.

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<sup>25</sup> Janice Kulyk Keefer, "Coming Across Bones: Historiographic Ethnofiction," *Essays on Canadian Writing* 57 (Winter 1995): 100.

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# Social Capital of Migrants in Transcultural Europe

Marcin Galent

## Introduction

The situation of migration is in many respects a tremendously interesting field of society which organises the dynamic processes of the reconstruction of social identity of the people who become entangled within in it. It is a unique testing ground through which run complex interests, cultural determinants and collective identification. The challenges posed to migrants in the contemporary world increasingly expose the element of social reality which in theoretical terms is described as life in a world in which the collective basis for the construction of social identity is becoming more numerous, more diverse, irregular, incoherent and of a fragmentary nature. As a result, the foundations are becoming increasingly heterogeneous but also more open to redefinition than ever before.<sup>1</sup>

It has been tried to explain this fluidity of social life in relation to numerous metaphors stemming from the phenomenon of “liquid modernity”.<sup>2</sup> The identity of the modern migrant seems to be the quintessence of these variables of identity, where the explicit nature of the typical adaptation strategies adopted by migrants of the last 20 years has been influenced by political change, changing technology and culture to become its current weakened state. European integration has opened up an even bigger workplace for migrants, while cheap and large scale transportation and communication links have increased their mobility range to an unprecedented level. This in turn has led to an increasingly mobile society and culture, where the borders delineated by the reality of the nation have become even less adequate for millions of Poles and other Europeans.

The challenge for this article is to contribute to the theoretical, as well as empirical, discourse on issues closely related to migration and identity reconstruction and their implications for understanding Europe as a transcultural space where “what needs to be recognized, therefore, is [...] the dialogical nature of all identi-

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<sup>1</sup> Matthias L. Maier and Thomas Risse, *Europeanization, Collective Identities and Public Discourses (IDNET Final Report)*, 2003, [http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~atasp/texte/030625\\_risse\\_idnet.pdf](http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~atasp/texte/030625_risse_idnet.pdf) (accessed 12 April 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Zygmunt Baumann, *Płynna rzeczywistość* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 2006).

ties and, consequently, that different cultural identifications can and will, in a multicultural society, cut across each other's reified boundaries.”<sup>3</sup> Studying migrants' lives leads us to understanding a crucial aspect of the current condition of the world where the intermingling, ‘transculturality’ and overlapping of different groups in a multicultural society show us the fact that cultures mutually, yet unequally, influence each other, continuously evolving and reconfiguring themselves. This is why it is important to remember that social identity should be regarded as a frequent and never-ending process where something happens rather than as something one possesses.

This article is based on a research project conducted in 2008 in Leuven (Belgium) by the Institute of European Studies of the Jagiellonian University and the Modernity and Society 1800-2000 Unit at the University of Leuven. The research consisted of 40 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Polish migrants of all ages and social classes, dozens of informal conversations and one month of participant observation.

### **Social Capital in the Life of Migrants**

One can identify many reasons why the role of social networks, regulated by defined norms, should be treated as an important aspect of the social integration of migrants. What is most important for this article is the fact that it has been often observed that the quantity and quality of social contacts determines the reconstruction of the social identity of migrants.<sup>4</sup> This happens mainly because people are simply influenced by the society surrounding them. This influence is defined best as “the process which leads to a change in behaviour, opinions and feelings of an individual who is influenced by what others do, how they think and what they feel.”<sup>5</sup> People simply imitate the behaviour of others, they give in to real or imagined pressures or they conform to those who they consider to have power or authority. This is the process that is best described by the saying “Tell me who your friends are, and I will show you who you are.”

That is why the latest theoretical reflections on social capital of migrants have brought a significant distinction of its two functional types: bridging and bonding capital. In this context, many researchers point to the fact that in the attempt to define the significance of social capital in pluralistic societies, that which is of most importance is not the amount of social capital but its quality: if it is bridging or bonding. Where bonding capital is understood as inward-looking, reinforcing ex-

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<sup>3</sup> Gerd Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic and Religious Identities* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 119.

<sup>4</sup> Dariusz Niedźwiedzki, *Migracje i tożsamość: Od teorii do analizy przypadku* (Kraków: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos, 2011), 199-265.

<sup>5</sup> Bogdan Wojciszke, *Człowiek wśród ludzi: Zarys psychologii społecznej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2002), 246.

clusive identities and a homogenous group, bridging capital, on the other hand, is outward-looking, linking heterogeneous groups together. The ultimate ideal of bridging social capital is the transcendence of different identities, as Putnam comments: "To build bridging social capital requires that we transcend our social and political and professional identities [...]"<sup>6</sup> This distinction is of significant importance in reference to research on the reconstruction process of the dynamics of the social identity of migrants, where the mere fact of having social capital, without defining its character, says little about their sense of group belonging, loyalty and identification.

Migrants build and maintain networks of social relations with members of the host society and this has a great influence on the strategy of their adaptation, the process of acculturation and the trajectory of reconstruction of social identity. The shape and condition of a migrant's social capital is of great importance not only for them but also for the host society. It can, to a large extent, be an indicator of their process of social and cultural integration.

The experience of migration is first and foremost a change in the social frames of reference which organise the life of migrants. As it is known, identity cannot be devoid of context, without a mirror in which the subject of interaction can see him- or herself, interpret the meaning of these interactions and through them reinterpret the image of the self. It exists in a state of constant dialogue between the individual and the partners of interactions. As a result of this dialogue, the image or imagination of the self is constantly being redefined. This essential assumption of the procedural and contextual mechanism of constructing identity is, in this research, the basis of understanding the changes that take place in the social identity of migrants, which is dependent on the quantity and quality of social capital which they have access to. The more contact they have with members of the host society, the quicker the process of internalisation of new modes of behaviour, systems of norms, values and meanings can be. The creation of cultural capital in the host society, as well as its reproduction in the sending society, is a long-term process, full of tension, conflicts and opposing pressures.

Investment in certain networks of contacts may, on the basis of conversion, bring advantages in other types of capital. Each migrant has a limited pool of resources that he can take advantage of in the process of building own social capital. Some resources have a reconstructive character, such as money. Social encounters are often tied up with the spending of money; therefore not everyone can afford to develop a social life. Other resources cannot be reconstructed: the decision to spend a holiday with one set of friends automatically excludes a holiday with others. Amongst migrants in Leuven, the distribution of these resources occurred in a space dictated by two important dimensions. The first dimension was brought

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<sup>6</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 411.

about by the need to maintain contacts with social networks left behind in the homeland and by the social reality in Leuven. The second dimension was set by the tension connected with the need to build social capital amongst the host society on the one hand and by upholding contacts with other Polish migrants on the other. In other words, every migrant had to make a more or less conscious decision of whether to uphold social relations in Poland or in Belgium and, when in Belgium, whether contact with compatriots or with the inhabitants of Leuven were more important.

The dynamics of tension between the two opposing poles, Leuven – place of origin, most often brought about the need to avoid the trap described in sociological literature as the “double absence.”<sup>7</sup> The essence of this trap rests on the theory that migrants, pendulum migrants included, often stop participating in social networks which they belonged to in their society of origin, while at the same time they are not able to build the appropriate networks in the host society, by which they experience a double exclusion. In their place of origin they are increasingly seen as ‘Belgians,’ whereas in the place of migration they are still considered as ‘others.’ This is where the “double absence” comes from, which according to Sayad may be the main cause of psychological discomfort for the migrant. This process may of course be double-sided. On the one hand, for the migrants the compatriots left in the country of origin become increasingly more foreign with every visit home. On the other hand, the reality of the host society never becomes a significant point of reference; the process of acculturation was never completed, nor was there a feeling of belonging and identification in the new environment and with the social networks. The migrants remain suspended in a permanent liminal state.<sup>8</sup>

The second dimension was determined with reference to different aspects of the migrants’ reality: one is pragmatic, the other is in a sense phatic. The building of social capital in the host society would often result in more or less quantifiable effects: it increased the chances of a better paid job and accommodation, it gave hope to the chance of finding a place in a nursery or pre-school for one’s kids, it provided the opportunity to learn the language quicker and more effectively, it would often build the foundation on which one could feel settled and, because of this, have a greater confidence in oneself. These utilitarian needs could, of course, be met by depending on networks existing amongst Polish compatriots in the host society. However, besides this purely instrumental dimension, all migrants talked about the profound need to maintain contact with other Poles in order to satisfy the purely phatic function of contact with people who share the same cultural base. The value of the contact was simply the contact itself. What was valuable was the reference to identical or very similar symbolic resources used in the process of symbolic interaction. This purely phatic function seemed to be decidedly wide-

<sup>7</sup> Abdelmalek Sayad, *The Suffering of the Immigrant* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004).

<sup>8</sup> Zdzisław Mach, *Niechciane miasta* (Kraków: Universitas, 1998).

spread. Even those respondents who openly confessed that they avoided contact with other Poles confirmed that from time to time they do meet with their compatriots, just because they would not be able to obtain the same satisfaction elsewhere that results from the mere possibility to, for example, speak in their native language. One of the reasons for seeking partners to form a network of contacts based on their non-instrumental character were most likely the rather small social distances within the community of migrants living in Leuven. What was decidedly characteristic of these social networks was the wide range in the socio-economic standing of the participants to be found within them. The variables which usually are at the base of forming informal networks in the country of origin, namely age, education, economic standing and career, played a much lesser role amongst the migrants in Leuven. The most important variable was a common culture and similar experience, as well as the pure satisfaction of having the possibility to communicate easily in a system of natural cultural codes.

These two dimensions, indicating the poles of tension around which Polish migrants built and reproduced their social capital, also indicated the framework of their social activities as well as the strength of social affiliations and emotional identification. The type of social capital that a migrant enjoyed often indicated the strength of group belonging and collective identification.

### **Social Capital vs. Social Identity**

The results of empirical research done on the community of Polish migrants in Leuven allow us to formulate a thesis about the existence of a discernible relationship between the quantity and the quality of pendulum migrants' social capital and the direction of change in the process of reconstruction of their social identity. These relationships fall into a clearly regular pattern, whose essence is best formulated by four ideal types, whose metaphorical names illustrate the situation that is representative of the whole Polish migrant population in Leuven. These four types are: 'residents,' 'guests,' 'commuters' and 'diasporians.'<sup>9</sup>

Even though these types lack empirical ontic status, they can possess a very concrete cognitive value. The names of the ideal types were chosen so that their connotations could, in the most effective way, encompass the essence of the modes of reconstruction of social identity. The names are not meant to be treated in a literal way. At the onset, it is important to clarify that the names have nothing to do with the length of migration or the frequency of visits back home. Therefore 'commuters' do not travel back and forth between their homes in Poland and Leuven any more than the other types, while 'residents' do not necessarily encompass

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<sup>9</sup> Marcin Galent, Idesbald Goddeeris and Dariusz Niedźwiedzki, *Migration and Europeanisation: Changing Identities and Values among Polish Pendulum Migrants and their Belgian Employers* (Krakow: Zakład Wydawniczy Nomos, 2009), 45-83.

those who have been living in Leuven for the longest period of time. The research clearly showed that the actual duration of the migratory period, as well as the frequency of visits back to Poland, do not need to have a deciding influence on the change of migrants' social identity. Many migrants whose stay in the host society was relatively short were able to very quickly make themselves at home in their new environment. Others, due to the deficit of certain resources, competences or because of strategic life plans or ideological choices, felt like strangers to Leuven, even after more than ten years of migratory peregrination.

### *Residents*

What makes 'residents' different in a significant way to other Polish migrants is the fact that they did not come to Belgium through the mechanism of chain migration, but because these were their life plans, aspirations and conscious decisions. Many of them had links to the university in Leuven; they had been there as Erasmus students, doctorate students or young researchers. They stayed in Belgium not because circumstances forced them to do so or because of financial reasons that compelled them to, but because they decided that life and work there would guarantee them more opportunities for personal development, for achieving higher qualifications and for furthering a career that would be more interesting and with better prospects: prospects not only in terms of higher wages but also for making use of their talents and intellectual potential. A common trait of 'residents' was the fact that their social identity was very weakly defined by territorial or national identification, Polish or Belgian. The activities of 'residents' were not dictated by a national framework but by their individual qualifications, competences, ambitions and potential channels of their realisation. These activities are coupled with changes in mentality. The consequence of these changes was the acceptance of their new multicultural environment as a naturally ordered world where national and ethnic diversity is simply one of the aspects of the lifeworld, or *Lebenswelt*,<sup>10</sup> and where multiculturalism is one of the obvious and natural components of life and its everyday interactions. Polishness does not disappear from their lives, it is treated as the kind of natural cultural baggage that everyone in the world carries, and not something that is the basis of classification into 'us' and 'them.' The majority of respondents treated their decisions as a natural and obvious consequence of living in a unified Europe and a globalised world.

### *Guests*

The second type of migrants are the 'guests.' This type consisted mainly of those migrants whose social capital was limited to acquaintances, friends or family who

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<sup>10</sup> Alfred Schütz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967).

helped to organise their lives abroad, but while living in Leuven were able to make and maintain contacts with 'others,' albeit mainly compatriots living in the city. This type of social capital had a decidedly binding character right from the start, but with time these bonds extended to certain Belgians, with whom relations started to be close and even intimate. The 'guests' mechanism of building social capital was determined mainly by practical factors, but with time these factors evolved and were supplemented with purely social and disinterested relations. This ability to develop close relations with inhabitants of Leuven resulted in a transformation of social identity in the direction that can be best described as transnational. The reconstruction of social identity took place in a framework dictated by two national cultures and thus somewhere in between what was broadly understood by the migrants to be Polish and Belgian.

### *Commuters*

The third type of migrant are 'commuters.' Their patterns were characterised by the most impoverished social capital, on the whole limited to their closest family ties or a wider circle of Polish friends and, as a result, their social capital has an unusually binding character. The life of the migrant is dominated by working for savings, scrimping in a manner referred to as saving every penny, reducing expenditure and activity outside of work to a minimum. The point of reference was always the reality that was left in the country of origin. This was not, however, a Poland treated as an 'imagined community',<sup>11</sup> but more a 'private' homeland<sup>12</sup> represented by their home, family and friends in their country.

### *Diasporians*

The fourth type of migrant which may be analysed, in terms of the change that their social identity underwent in Leuven, are those referred to as 'diasporians.' What differentiated them completely from the other three types was open verbalisation and confirmation of different activities connected to Polishness, understood as Polish national identity. What united them was a need to maintain and strengthen the social networks amongst Poles. The character of their social capital has a bridging nature, in the sense that whilst 'residents' are not dependent upon institutionalised relations with their fellow countrymen and 'guests' and 'commuters' tend to function only amongst their own particular social networks, the 'diasporians' are motivated to create a network based on one criteria, namely nationality. However, from the perspective of the whole of Leuven's society, the character of social capital created in this way has a decidedly binding nature. 'Diasporians' try to create

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<sup>11</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso 1983).

<sup>12</sup> Stanisław Ossowski, *O ojczyźnie i narodzie* (Warszawa: PWN 1984).

and institutionalise a network of social relations mainly on the basis of belonging to Polish culture, understood as a national culture. In a manner different to the 'residents' and 'guests,' who do not regard Polishness as an integral, clearly defined whole, in the consciousness of the 'diasporians' it is reproduced as a precise and obvious model. The aim of their activity in Leuven society became to reconcile Polishness with emigration.

## **Conclusion**

The results of the research presented here use as an indicator the scale and quality of the social capital that characterises migrants. An obvious conclusion, in accordance with what was mentioned earlier, is the diversity of the ways in which the reconstruction of collective identity is not only illustrated by the migrant population of Leuven but also in relation to how a given individual, in the course of his career, may adhere to a greater or a lesser extent to these ideal types. It is very easy to imagine that, for example, the 'commuter' type may also change into one of the other three.

The question connected to numbers and percentages also arises, namely how many pendulum migrants in Leuven are 'residents,' 'guests,' commuters' or 'diasporians'? The experience we gained from our research is that those with greater social capital are generally overrepresented in social research. They are people who are generally more open, they do not shun contact with others, they trust that their motivation will be in some sense useful.

The final aspect is the question of to what degree these four types may be extended to the wider world, to what extent they are limited to the micro-society of Polish migrants in Leuven and to what extent they could be used to describe the millions of migrants in Europe.



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# The *Neustadt* in Strasbourg

## A Space for Transcultural Identity Building?

Alexandre Kostka

### Introduction

In 2012, Strasbourg was actively preparing the application for a UNESCO World heritage label for an area which occupies a substantial amount of space of the inner city: the so-called *Neustadt*, a term which designates the urban extension planned and built mostly in the North Eastern part of the town between 1878 and 1918, at a moment when Alsace-Lorraine was part of the German Reich.<sup>1</sup> The *Neustadt* is

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<sup>1</sup> This article owes much to the discussions in the framework of the research project “Genèse et réception de l’architecture et des formes urbaines dans une région frontalière (1850-1950): Une histoire croisée franco-allemande,” which is being conducted since 2010 at the MISHA (Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences Humaines en Alsace; Anne-Doris Meyer, Karine Dupré, Sophie Eberhardt, Johannes Dahm). See: [www.misha.fr/sites/5/File/li10-misha-web.pdf](http://www.misha.fr/sites/5/File/li10-misha-web.pdf) (accessed 5 April 2012).

The paper is also much indebted to Marc Schalenberg, Centre for Metropolitan Studies, Berlin, for many research perspectives regarding the question of ‘urban icons.’ In the limited space of this contribution, many aspects can only be touched upon – they will be developed more fully as the research programme at MISHA unfolds.

The fundamental research on the question has been accomplished by Klaus Nohlen, *Baupolitik im Reichsland Elsass-Lothringen, 1871-1918: Die repräsentativen Staatsbauten um den ehemaligen Kaiserplatz in Strassburg* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1982); French translation: id.: *Construire une capitale, Strasbourg impérial de 1870 à 1918* (Strasbourg: Société savante d’Alsace, 1997); id., “Strasbourg après 1870: réorganisation des espaces,” in *Villes rattachées, villes reconfigurées XVI<sup>e</sup>-XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. Denise Turrel (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2003), 231-45.

The contribution also draws on many publications, which for reason of space are not always mentioned specifically, but which are to be found in the bibliography: François Uberfill, “Strasbourg, capitale du Reichsland Elsass-Lothringen: à la découverte de la Neustadt,” *Saisons d’Alsace* 45 (2010): 45-53; *Strasbourg 1900: Naissance d’une capitale*, ed. Rodolphe Rapetti (Paris: Somogy, 2000) (holds many interesting individual contributions); Jean-Marie Perouse de Montclos and Brigitte Parent, *Alsace: Le dictionnaire du patrimoine* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2011); Jean-Pierre Beck, Guy Bronner and Dominique Toursel-Harster, *Dictionnaire des monuments historiques d’Alsace* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 1995); Denis Durand de Bousingen et. al., ed., *Strasbourg: urbanisme et architecture des origines à nos jours* (Strasbourg: Oberlin, 1996); Georges Foessel et. al., ed., *Strasbourg: Panorama monumental* (Strasbourg: G4], 2003; originally published in 1984); Francis Weidmann, *Strasbourg, capitale du Reichsland et sa nouvelle université* (Strasbourg: Oberlin, 1995); Conseil de l’Europe. ed., *Le projet urbain dans l’histoire de Strasbourg. Actes du colloque des 30 et 31 octobre 1981* (Strasbourg: Conseil de l’Europe, 1983); Angéla Kerdilès Weiler, *Limites urbaines de Strasbourg, évolution et mutation* (Strasbourg: Société Savante d’Alsace,

not yet a household name for specialists of urban planning. They are wrong. Turning the prestigious but somewhat provincial town on the Rhine into a regional capital, even a showcase for German Kultur, was one of the most important urban planning projects of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Baron Haussmann's intervention on the still mostly medieval tissue of Paris (1852-1870) and the construction of the Ringstrasse (1857-1913, built in several phases) in Vienna were bigger in total size; but if one takes as a measure the size of the original town, the construction of the *Neustadt* ranks probably among the most profound restructurings of a traditional habitat, since the 'Old' town has approximately only one third of the size of its extension (230 ha to 610 ha). If the 'addition' is bigger than the original portion, a question of hierarchy between old and new arises, which otherwise is relevant only in the case of colonial towns such as the extension of Delhi to become New Delhi (inaugurated in 1913). One has to add another criterion, less visible, but which is at least as important. Both Paris and Vienna had, at the moment of the re-engineering of the city centre, vibrant outskirts which had flourished with industrialisation.<sup>2</sup> None of this existed in Strasbourg, still mostly a town of merchants and notables, where military reasons (the town was protected by a large ring which was to be flooded as the enemy approached) forbade any construction for several kilometres around the old fortifications.

What made this venture even more daring, was its transnational nature, since on a multi-layered town existing since Roman times, the authorities of the newly founded German Reich were aiming to construct a town that would not only proclaim military victory, but would appear to usher the medieval town directly into a bright 20<sup>th</sup> century under a new tutelage – with the clear desire to push the French period (which had begun in 1681 with the formal annexation of Strasbourg – until then a 'free city' under the protection of the Germanic emperor – by the Sun King, Louis XIV) into the shade.

Today, with the Franco-German rapprochement de facto being the 'motor' of European unification, with the cultural television channel ARTE being symbolically established at the border of the Rhine, it is a clear signal of a new era of transcultural identity that a French border city like Strasbourg puts forward its 'Germanic'

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2005); François Loyer, *Architecture et urbanisme à Strasbourg, 1910-1930*, thematic issue of *Monuments Historiques* (Paris: Caisse nationale des monuments historiques et des sites, 1990); contemporaneous voices: Architekten und Ingenieur Verein für Elsass-Lothringen, ed., *Strassburg und seine Bauten* (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1894); Charles Goehner and Emil Brumder, *Geschichte der räumlichen Entwicklung der Stadt Strassburg* (Strasbourg: Heitz & Co., 1935). There are many historical narratives of Strasbourg, the most recent are: Benoît Jordan, *Histoire de Strasbourg* (Paris: Gisserot, 2006); Guy Trendel, *Racontez-moi Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> The control of a potentially menacing proletarian suburb even was one of the central preoccupations after the riots of 1848. In Vienna, where the 'centre' housed a vulnerable aristocratic society which had been blockaded; in Paris, it was rather the control of an equally menacing overpopulated city centre that preoccupied Napoleon III. None of these motivations for new city planning exist in Strasbourg.

cultural heritage in order to receive a UNESCO world heritage label. One has to remember that this venture is ‘transnational’ in itself and thus reflects perfectly the ultimate aim of UNESCO, which is not to give out ‘good points’ to any given particularly meriting nation but to distinguish and protect a cultural good for the sake of ‘humankind’ as such.

Yet, somewhat surprisingly, it is impossible to find a single street in the city centre or the *Neustadt* itself that would be named after one of the mayors who engineered the urban planning (Otto Back, Rudolf Schwander) or one of the main architects responsible for this very large urban planning project (August Orth, Hermann Eggert, Fritz Beblo, Paul Bonatz, Paul Schmitthenner, etc.).<sup>3</sup> Even the architect who designed the original master plan, Jean-Geoffroy Conrath, although a Frenchman appointed during the times of Napoleon III and despite the fact that he was able to leave most of the French urban texture untouched, only got a meagre little street in a commercial suburb!<sup>4</sup>

It is even fair to say that until very recent times the *Neustadt* had been somewhat shunned by large parts of the Strasbourg population; its history was not shared to the same degree as other central parts of the town in the ‘collective memory’ in the sense of the ‘inventor’ of this much-used term, Maurice Halbwachs – who became professor at the University of Strasbourg in 1919.<sup>5</sup> One of its major ‘urban icons,’ the Emperor’s Palace (which now houses the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine) was about to be torn down in the early 1950s, although it had survived the war almost unscathed. The unofficial memory states that the building owes its survival mainly to its sturdiness – as it was made of massive stone, with an impressive iron-concrete structure underlying, the authorities were afraid it would be just too costly to blow it up and carry the debris outside the city gates. One has to add that for more than one citizen of Strasbourg, this building had not been the palace of the Emperor anymore (who, in any case, had had no particular taste for the citizen culture of the city and had preferred to dwell in his lofty Hohenzollern fairy-dream castle of Hohkönigsburg) but of the terrible Nazi Gauleiter Robert Wagner.

This clearly points to an ‘identity problem,’ which, of course, cannot be addressed by this publication, but upon which some light can be shed by looking into the complicated genesis of the *Neustadt* and by asking questions about its transna-

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<sup>3</sup> There are of course notable exceptions, that point to a shift of the place of the *Neustadt* in the “mental landscape” of the city, see, for instance, François Uberfill, “Rodolphe Schwander, maire alsacien de Strasbourg sous le Reichsland (1906-1918),” in *Autour des Dietrich: Hommages à Ady Schwan-der et Edouard Schloesing*, ed. Bernard Vogler (Reichshoffen: Association de Dietrich, 2008), 134-65.

<sup>4</sup> A street named after him is located in the recently urbanised zone ‘Parc des Poteries’; the same ‘honour’ is shared by Otto Back, who was mayor when he was active (doing what?).

<sup>5</sup> About ‘collective memory,’ see Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich: Beck, 1999); Jan Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1997).

tional nature by making use of the theory of *histoire croisée* forwarded by Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, which seems most appropriate for understanding its specificity.<sup>6</sup> In particular, we will see how the urban space is punctuated by ‘urban icons’ which try to connect different cultural spaces – somewhat loosely and incorrectly labelled as ‘Germanic’ and ‘French’ – inside the city borders.<sup>7</sup> Altogether, these perspectives may help to gain a new understanding of an important part of the Strasbourg cityscape that begins to regain its ‘proper place’ in the mental landscape of its inhabitants.

### **Town Planning and Building of National Identity at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The French monarchy, which had annexed Alsace Lorraine after the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648, for reasons which we cannot address in the framework of this paper, never tried to annex Alsace ‘culturally.’<sup>8</sup> This was particularly evident as far as language was concerned. It was enough that a part of the social elites – those who would have to deal with tax collectors, judges, military commanders etc. – understood what was asked of them. Conversely, the civil administrators sent from Paris, whatever their personal sympathies with Alsace might be (and there seem to have been many), never bothered to learn the dialect of the region.

However, in order to show its newly acquired power, France took a stratagem that was to have a long future: it created the first modern ‘urban icon’ in the still medieval cityscape: the bishop’s residence, the Palais Rohan. Named after one of the families most closely connected to the royal household, the palace was built by none other than the *Premier architecte du roi*, Robert de Cotte, between 1728 and 1741. Its clear, ‘classical’ style was in sharp contrast with its surroundings; the building site itself, which brought together some of the finest craftsmen of France and Alsace, proved to be one of the principal ‘design schools,’ which helped bringing Strasbourg into the orbit of the latest Paris fashion. A generation after its con-

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity,” *History and Theory* 45.1 (2006): 30-50. Originally published in a larger framework including case-studies: *De la comparaison à l'histoire croisée*, ed. Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> The architectural critic Charles Jencks launched the term in 2005, in order to describe the ‘star architecture’ that followed the ‘city branding’ by the construction of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank O. Gehry (1997); see Charles Jencks, *The Iconic Building: The Power of Enigma* (New York: Rizzoli, 2005); since, the discussion has broadened and has fallen on fertile grounds for earlier periods, see Philip J. Ethington and Vanessa R. Schwartz, ed., *Urban Icons*, special issue of *Urban History* 33:1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See the focus article by Celina Krebs, Marc Schalenberg and Sandra Schürmann, “Spektakel, Allheilmittel, Forschungsfeld: Perspektiven auf ‘Urban Icons,’” *Informationen zur modernen Stadtgeschichte* 2/2011: 7-16.

<sup>8</sup> This seeming indifference contrasted with a quite pushy attitude towards Lorraine, which officially joined France as late as 1766.

struction, in 1773, the young Johann Wolfgang von Goethe paid indirect homage to the building, by choosing it as a backdrop in his propaganda for the glorification of the Germanic genius of the supposed builder of the Strasbourg cathedral, Erwin von Steinbach.<sup>9</sup>

The French building policy did, of course, not rest on one single building; a little later, in 1765, the famous architect Jacques-François Blondel presented the project for a complete redesign of the city-centre – a project that lacked funding and political will, but which nevertheless brought about the destruction of the last remnant of the status of Strasbourg as ‘free city,’ the former town hall, and the construction of the Aubette, a large rectangular building which was to house the military commander of the citadel.

Thus when the Germans moved in to conquer the city, they found a surrounding that seemed not unlike the cityscape they could find in Nuremberg, Augsburg, or other cities of the Southern part of Germany. On the other side, the Alsatians, who had strong regional links with Baden, Württemberg, and the Palatinate, were surprised that the Prussians did not resemble at all their peaceful neighbours.

The linguistic factor proved to be a false indicator and might have been responsible for much of the future misunderstandings (both in the symbolic and concrete sense). Most of the population of Alsace and much of the population of Lorraine spoke a German dialect (several, in fact, with regional differences as in Switzerland). The Alsatian language has survived in parts until today, but it is far from having the importance it had in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when only the upper strata of society (i.e. those who were in touch with the authorities in Paris) were completely fluent in ‘high’ French.<sup>10</sup> This linguistic factor, together with the strong presence of Protestantism in its Lutheran version (France is mostly Catholic and the Protestant minority is of Calvinist obedience), contributed to persuading the German political and military authorities that they would be able to convince the inhabitants of the region to join the national framework Bismarck was establishing after the victory of 1871.

At the outset, the attitude of the German authorities vis-à-vis Strasbourg was quite moderate and they wished to avoid the impression that a hard yoke was imposed upon the population. The Germans also felt they had to make good for the heavy destructions they had inflicted upon the town during a siege which had degenerated into one of the first massive destructions of ‘cultural heritage’ in Europe since the Napoleonic times. Indeed, the German armies under General von

<sup>9</sup> Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Von deutscher Baukunst*: D.M. Ervini a Steinbach, originally published in *Von Deutscher Art und Kunst: Einige fliegende Blätter*, ed. Johann Gottfried Herder (Hamburg: Bode, 1773).

<sup>10</sup> On the strong links of the cultural elites in Strasbourg with France, see Anne-Doris Meyer, *Au service de l'Alsace: lettres d'Hugo Haug à Henri Albert, 1904-1914* (Strasbourg: Publications de la Société savante d'Alsace, 2010); Bernard Vogler, *Histoire culturelle de l'Alsace: Du Moyen Âge à nos jours – Les très riches heures d'une région frontalière* (Strasbourg: La Nuec bleue, 1994).

Werder, knowing the symbolic value of a conquest of Strasbourg, wished not to lose time and during the shelling of the heavy fortification many historical buildings such as the cathedral got badly damaged while the Art Museum and the Library (containing a very precious Medieval manuscript, the *Hortus Deliciarum*) as well as the Opera house were destroyed. In the years following the conquest, the Germans simply ‘repaired’ what they had destroyed, rebuilding the Opera house and various churches and civil buildings, which had suffered from the bombarding, just as they had been before.

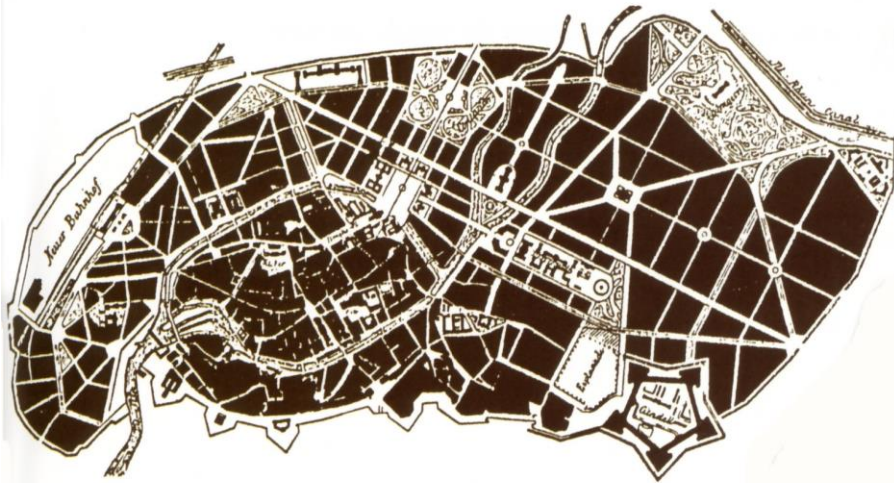
At a time when the German Empire thought to establish itself as a *Kulturstaat*, Strasbourg became a showcase. ‘Culture’ was the magical word, which would allow for making forget the violent conquest of the city and would also give meaning to Bismarck’s politico-military establishment of the nation-state (which would soon be ridiculed in Nietzsche’s *Untimely Considerations*). As soon as summer 1871, the University was at the centre of preoccupation, a library was founded and generously funded, and an art gallery was established which took as its model the prestigious Berlin museum.<sup>11</sup> This ‘soft’ approach was also in line with a general policy, which might be described as ‘functionalist’ (if one admits a ‘loose’ definition): as more and more opportunities would arise in the political and economic realm and spaces for decisions would progressively be shifted to local authorities, it was hoped that Alsatians would take the chance to participate, even that the social elites themselves would take initiatives in order to show their new solidarities. In the past, had not the neighbouring German regions of Baden, Württemberg, and the Palatinate shown their political sympathies with Paris by adopting the latest French styles, going as far as to invite the architects of the king in Versailles to draw up their châteaux (Mannheim, Karlsruhe, Solitude close to Stuttgart, etc.)?

For many reasons, it soon became clear that, if Strasbourg would have to live up to its new function as regional capital of the ‘new’ German state of Alsace-Lorraine, it had to be equipped accordingly and that the initiative had to come from outside. In 1873, the German authorities took direct charge of municipal administration, disbanded the city council and imposed Otto Back as caretaker municipal administrator (for which the German language holds the delicious expression of *Bürgermeistereivervalter*). Back proved to be an energetic administrator, slowly gaining the respect of the citizens he was administering. This move led to the establishment of the *Neustadt*, or ‘German town,’ not as an extension of the ‘Old,’ culturally multi-layered Strasbourg but as a side-by-side venture of a model city which was erected on formerly virgin grounds.

<sup>11</sup> Bernadette Schnitzler, *Histoire des musées de Strasbourg: des collections entre France et Allemagne* (Strasbourg: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, 2009); Tanja Baensch, “‘Un petit Berlin’? Die Neugründung der Straßburger Gemälde Sammlung durch Wilhelm Bode im zeitgenössischen Kontext: Ein Beitrag zur Museumspolitik im deutschen Kaiserreich (Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2007).

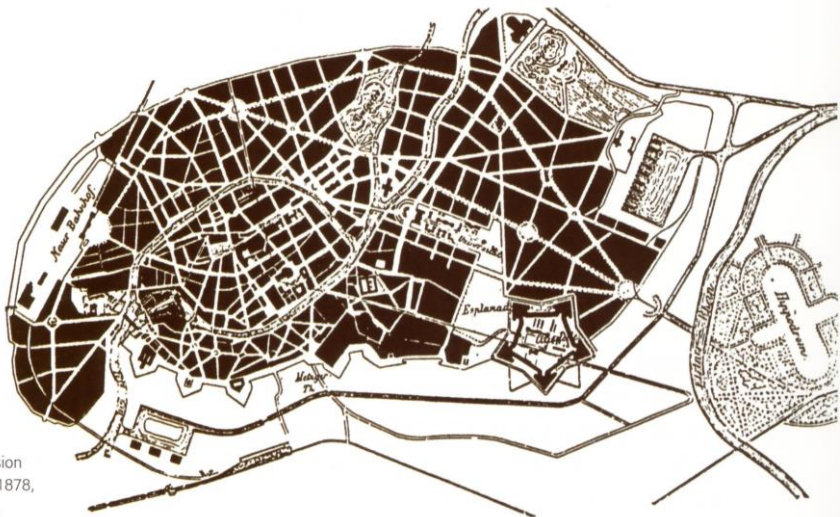


## How to Connect a 'New' City to Its Urban History?



Plan d'extension  
de Strasbourg, 1878,  
projet de J. G. Conrath.

Figure 1<sup>12</sup>



Plan d'extension  
de Strasbourg, 1878,  
projet d'A. Orth.

Figure 2<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> AVCUS (Archives de la Ville et de la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

As soon as 1871, the military engineers started to think about a possible extension of the city, which was conditioned to the structure of the fortification.<sup>14</sup> Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the city had been defended according to a plan designed by the architect of the ‘iron belt,’ Vauban.<sup>15</sup> The improvement of the artillery made this strategy obsolete and the German military designed a new line of outpost forts, which were to block approaching armies far enough away to prevent a bombardment such as the one they themselves had inflicted. Only in 1875, when this line was completed, could a new urban planning be seriously considered: in Metz, the main fortress against France, the German military prevented any new construction until 1902! It was only a direct order from Wilhelm II, given in his capacity a supreme commander of the armed forces, that opened the way.<sup>16</sup>

This still left unanswered the question of how to construct the new ‘German’ city, a question which was of course loaded with heavy political implications.

In 1877, two projects were submitted for final decision by the authorities: one by the Berlin architect August Orth and one by Jean-Geoffroy Conrath, the architect in chief of the city, who had been appointed in the days of Napoleon III and who had chosen to stay and work together with the German authorities.

Interestingly, it is the solution suggested by the Berlin architect Orth that bears most witness to the influence of the plans developed by Baron Haussmann in Paris – one could almost speak of the return of a French design via Germany to the border region separating the two countries. Orth suggested a complete redesign of the city in order to connect the new city to the old, which would have completely altered not only the central part of the French period from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Place Broglie, but would also have destroyed a large part of the urban habitat dating from the German period of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century (figure I). This echoes the way Haussmann moved through large parts of the medieval Paris, especially in the Ile de la Cité, where few stones were left unturned.

In contrast, the plan of Conrath (figure II) appeared to be quite moderate, as he suggested to keep the existing town intact, with very few alterations only where the two towns were to be connected (on the site of the former north western fortification, where several old bridges had to give way to new structures).

Instead of connecting the old and the new towns by means of designing large avenues prolonging the New City into the Old – as Haussmann had done in Paris, whose example Orth was ready to follow –, Conrath suggested that the two parts of the future Strasbourg should be held together by an optical reference to the one iconic building upon which the Alsatian bourgeoisie and the Germans could all

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<sup>14</sup> See Nohlen, note 1.

<sup>15</sup> Roland Recht, Georges Foessel and Jean-Pierre Kélin, *Connaitre Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: Alsatia, 1988), and references note 1.

<sup>16</sup> Jean-Jacques Cartal, Dominique Laburte and Paul Maurand, *Les villes pittoresques: Études sur l'architecture et l'urbanisme de la ville allemande de Metz entre 1870 et 1918* (Nancy: C.E.M.P.A., 1981).

agree: the Cathedral.<sup>17</sup> Though the Cathedral is universally known, it might be necessary to remind the reader that its spire was the tallest historical building in Christendom until the tower of the Cathedral of Ulm received a metal contraption in 1890 which made it slightly higher than Strasbourg. Very astutely, Conrath's plans were designed in such a way that the tower of the Cathedral should be visible from almost any central point of the *Neustadt*.

Using the Cathedral as 'urban icon,' Conrath would be able to respect both the contract of connecting the Old and the New towns and to respect the cultural multi-layer structure that has given the town its very special transcultural identity up to now.

With a very small majority, it was Conrath's design that was finally agreed upon by the authorities. One has to bear in mind, however, that already at that moment, the discussion was not polarised around 'national' issues but rather by a technocratic way of thinking, which focused around a book such as Reinhardt Baumeister's *Urban Extension in Technical, Security and Economical Aspects*, which was published in 1876 and had received a large reception.<sup>18</sup> Baumeister was even one of the members of the jury, who gave the contract to Conrath. It is thus fair to state that besides 'national' considerations (which were of course present) there is another discourse that is parallel, which is the discourse of the 'expert' who is not linked to a particular nation but to a field of competence. This 'transnational expert knowledge' is one of the aspects that current historical presentations of urban planning, which are too nation-focused, have frequently underestimated.

This left open the question in what style the New City was to be constructed. At the time of nation-building, stylistic options were never simply a matter of aesthetics.<sup>19</sup> Especially in Germany, the new nation state thought to establish itself by means of a 'patriotic' Gothic, or rather neo-gothic, style. Later on, when it became common knowledge that the Gothic style was actually of French origin, it was the Roman style that was mostly chosen for official buildings such as schools, post offices, barracks, and railway stations – and the case of Metz bears witness to this (sometimes very loud) message in stone. It is therefore surprising to notice that in Strasbourg this visual language is almost absent. With some notable exceptions such as the Central Post Office (1899, Neo-Gothic) and the Central Synagogue

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<sup>17</sup> The number of books on the cathedral of Strasbourg alone testify to its 'iconic' status, see: *Strasbourg: La grâce d'une cathédrale*, ed. Mgr Joseph Doré (Strasbourg: La Nuée Bleue, 2007), which contains an extensive bibliography.

<sup>18</sup> Reinhardt Baumeister, *Stadterweiterungen in technischer, baupolizeilicher und wirtschaftlicher Beziehung* (Berlin: Ernst & Korn, 1876). See also the very influential book of the architect in charge of the almost contemporaneous *Neustadt* of Cologne (1881, doubling the size from 400h to 800h), Joseph Stübgen, *Der Städtebau: Handbuch der Architektur* (Darmstadt: Bergstrasser, 1890), which was to become a textbook for urban planning, republished in several editions until 1924.

<sup>19</sup> Ekkehard Mai and Stephan Waetzold, ed., *Kunstverwaltung, Bau- und Denkmal-Politik im Kaiserreich* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1981).

(1896, Neo-Roman, demolished during the Nazi occupation in 1940-41), the *Neustadt* is built in a heteroclite association of styles, combining mostly Neo-Renaissance (both in its 'Italian' and 'South-German' version) and Neo-Baroque, but also associating elements of Orientalism<sup>20</sup>, Art Nouveau<sup>21</sup>, and even frequent allusions to such typically French styles as Louis XIII and even the sober French baroque favoured under Louis XIV. It frequently happens, as in the case of the headquarter of the former insurance company 'Germania' (1885, subsequently named 'Gallia'), that a single building exhibits even a multi-layer style, where 'German Renaissance' with its use of brick and stone alludes to the French Louis XIII style.<sup>22</sup>

### **The *Neustadt* and Its Stylistic Heterogeneity: A Discussion about Transnational City Building?**

The history of architecture is itself a tributary to national stereotypes.<sup>23</sup> Since building is considered to be the most symbolic gesture of sovereignty, historians of architecture have a natural tendency to apply this criterion to the urban projects they consider. Thus they tend to overestimate the impact of the nation-state on building policies, which pervade not only the state architecture (like the Palace of the Emperor, the University, etc.) but also a large quantity of 'private' buildings which obey to a different agenda. These entrepreneurs did not want to fulfil a 'patriotic' programme but tried to keep their options open, in order to attract patrons which desired to live in a 'neutral' setting. Including 'French' styles (such as the already mentioned Louis XIII) was also a way of indicating to potential Alsatian patrons that they were welcome as well.<sup>24</sup> Looked upon closely enough, the homo-

<sup>20</sup> The orientalizing style is for instance to be seen at the 'Egyptian house' (Maison égyptienne, architect François Scheyder, decorator Adolphe Zilly), 10 Avenue du Général Rapp, constructed between 1905 and 1906.

<sup>21</sup> See Shelly Hornstein, *Tendance d'architecture Art Nouveau à Strasbourg*, PhD thesis (Strasbourg: Université de Strasbourg, 1981).

<sup>22</sup> Immeuble Gallia (1885, architects Heinrich Joseph Kayser, Karl von Großheim), 1 Boulevard de la Victoire, Strasbourg. The building was said to be the "most beautiful" in Strasbourg; Kayser and von Großheim established a successful office and belonged to the top league of the Berlin architects, where they worked, for instance, alongside a giant such as Alfred Messel, for the Wertheim Department store chain (Alexanderplatz building). Both Kayser and von Großheim were students of August Orth, who had submitted one of the 'master-plans' for the Strasbourg Neustadt (see above). They were also the architects of many residential villas in the Tiergarten, the best address in Berlin.

<sup>23</sup> Volker Gebhardt, *Das Deutsche in der deutschen Kunst* (Cologne: Dumont, 2004) (with bibliographical references); Andreas Daum, "Capitals in Modern History: Inventing Urban Spaces for the Nation," in *Berlin-Washington, 1800-2000: Capital Cities, Cultural Representation and National Identities*, ed. Andreas Daum and Christoph Mauch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3-28.

<sup>24</sup> Quite few Alsatian or French families seem to have accepted this offer, giving the Neustadt a quite coherent 'Germanic' sociological profile; for the relations between Germans and Alsatians, see the standard work by François Uberfill and Pierre Aycoberry, *La société strasbourgeoise entre France et Alle-*

generously ‘Germanic’ character gives way to a more flexible approach. One can go as far as considering that the architecture of Strasbourg can be judged most accurately against the background of an approach labelled *histoire croisée* and developing a special sensibility for aspects which are suppressed by a univocally national perspective.<sup>25</sup>

This is one of the angles of a current research project which has been conducted under the supervision of Hervé Doucet and the author since 2010 at the MISHA (Maison Interuniversitaire des Sciences Humaines en Alsace).<sup>26</sup> For instance, it is interesting to note – and demands investigation – that many of the architects who were active in Strasbourg did not only work in Strasbourg but rather developed a ‘regional’ identity that stretched out to the capital of the neighbouring region of Baden, Karlsruhe, where many of them received professional training. The same applies to many of the artisans, masons, bricklayers, or carpenters, who moved from building site to building site according to the economic situation, carrying with them certain styles and professional tendencies. Similarly, it has to be asked how the buildings were perceived during the moment of their construction, whether there was a specific ‘intention’ and how this was being conveyed, and how the diverse categories of ‘public’ responded to this offer. This should also include the important – yet total neglected – question of how this building project (one of the largest of the German Empire as a whole) was marketed.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, the case of the *Neustadt* also shows that cultural historians have to remember one of the central rules of their craft and be very careful about the precise date of the building that is considered; looked upon closely enough, the object *Neustadt* tends to show several facets that do not necessarily totally overlap. Indeed, the case of the Municipal Bath<sup>28</sup> (built 1904-1910), for instance, shows that this building, although it is situated in the central perimeter of the official building project, in immediate vicinity of the University and not too far away from the Central Post Office<sup>29</sup> (both of which are emblematic buildings of the Reich), bears witness

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*magne (1871-1924): la société strasbourgeoise à travers les mariages entre Allemands et Alsaciens à l'époque du Reichsland – Le sort des couples mixtes après 1918* (Strasbourg: Société savante d'Alsace, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> See note 6.

<sup>26</sup> See above, note 1.

<sup>27</sup> See Thomas Biskup and Marc Schalenberg, “Die Vermarktung Berlins in Geschichte und Gegenwart,” in *Selling Berlin: Imagebildung und Stadtmarketing von der preußischen Residenz bis zur Bundeshauptstadt*, ed. Thomas Biskup and Marc Schalenberg (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2008), 9-21.

<sup>28</sup> Bains Municipaux (1905-1908, 1910-11, architect Fritz Beblo), 10 Boulevard de la Victoire.

<sup>29</sup> Hôtel des Postes (1897-1899, architects Ewald von Rechenberg and Ernst Hake), 2 Boulevard de la Victoire. Initially, the building was supposed to be built in Neo-Renaissance; finally, on the insistence of the Secretary of State von Stephan, the more ‘Germanic’ Neo-Gothic was chosen, see Harry Franz and Maryline Simler, *1899, l'Hôtel des Postes de Strasbourg* (Strasbourg: Société d'histoire de La Poste et de France Telecom en Alsace, 2009).

to a completely different spirit of organizing the urban space.<sup>30</sup> Its aim is certainly not, as one might hastily consider, to bring the gift of ‘German’ spirit of cleanliness to a French public which supposedly too infrequently made use of soap. Rather, it has to be seen against the backdrop of a new feeling of proud self-administration of the municipal authorities under the leadership of the energetic left wing politician Rudolf Schwander, who, after the German authorities had transferred powers back to the elected mayor, embarked on a vast series of enterprises showing the initiative of the city. The building, designed by the municipal architect Fritz Beblo, displays a style that could be located as a Neo-Baroque, which is also to be found in other cities on the Rhine. For instance, the round entrance can also be found in the castle Biebrich in Wiesbaden (1700-1750). But with its vast roof, besides being close to the church of St. Thomas, it is also reminiscent of other constructions of Beblo, such as his schools in Neudorf, which try to develop a specific ‘Alsatian’ regional style (*Heimatstil*).<sup>31</sup> This again can be seen against the backdrop of another prominent building which was inaugurated in the same year not far from Strasbourg: the imperial castle of Hohkönigsburg (Haut-Koenigsbourg), where the Berlin architect Bodo Ebhardt, on the grounds of a former building dating from medieval times, between 1901 and 1908 built a romantic interpretation of a Hohenzollern fortress.

Interestingly, in the course of the conception, the city council sent a group of specialists to several German and Austrian towns in order to better understand the latest techniques – thus reinforcing the role of an ‘expertise’ group that did not obey to ‘nationalist’ motives but rather to a new ideal of ‘transnational’ savoir faire.

## Conclusion

To summarise, we might say that the closer you look at the picture, the more complicated it gets, since many intentions overlay each other. Only a hasty and prejudiced view can summarise the very complex process of urban town planning under the category of ‘nation building.’ The process could better be understood as a constant discussion between many groups: politicians, entrepreneurs, patrons, architects, builders, etc., who have different motivations at different times. Thus the case of the *Neustadt* in Strasbourg is, namely because of its size and duration, very different from similar enterprises in Metz or Colmar. Whereas the small city of

<sup>30</sup> Didier Laroche, “L’architecture de Fritz Beblo (1872-1947), Stadtbaumeister de Strasbourg,” in *Strasbourg 1900* (see note 1), 192-9; Liane Zoppas, *Les Bains, mémoire de TPFE* (Strasbourg: Ecole d’architecture, 1997).

<sup>31</sup> Interesting perspectives in Wolfgang Voigt, “Académies et manuels de directives (Baufibel): les manières françaises et allemandes pour imposer un style architectural à l’Alsace,” *Revue d’Alsace* 131 (2005): 209-17. See also *Bauen auf Tradition: Fritz Beblo 1872-1947, Stadtbaurat in Strassburg und München*, exhibition catalogue (Munich: Stadtarchiv München, 1991).

Colmar does not leave enough room for a vast building project and the mainly military character of Metz does not leave enough space for a municipal enterprise, Strasbourg can truly claim to be a laboratory for transnational urban planning – but just as not every laboratory test is successful, in the case of the Alsatian capital, it is equally not possible to state that the process was in each and every case convincing. This trial-and-error principle conduced to self-criticism, as was the case with Beblo, who tried to develop a more ‘human’ and ‘historical’ approach for the last phase of urban planning in Strasbourg before the Germans had to leave.

As already mentioned in the introduction, the Alsatians tended to prefer living outside the *Neustadt*, leaving this area mostly to the newcomers from the Reich (for which the term *Altdeutsche* was invented – those who come from the ‘old Germany’). It is interesting to notice that even today, the *Neustadt*, which is adjacent to the main European institutions (European Parliament, European Commission building, etc.) is housing a much higher proportion of ‘transcultural’ inhabitants than ‘pure’ Alsatians. With a lapse of several generations, continuity (albeit not the one initially intended) has prevailed.

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## **Part Four**

### **The Role of the State**



# Multiple Democracies

## A Cultural-Sociological Approach to Democratization and Europeanization

Paul Blokker

### Introduction

In the last two decades, the study of democratization in the new European Union member states has predominantly been concerned with the identification of the emergence of stable democratic orders, i.e., the consolidation of liberal-democratic, constitutional regimes. In a related way, it is widely accepted that democratization is not only about legal-procedural institutions, but that well-functioning democracies also need a democratic culture. In other words, democratic regimes do not merely consist of a set of 'hard' institutions (the constitution, separation of powers, the rule of law), but also need a supportive cultural substratum of 'soft' institutions in the form of what is variably referred to as a 'background culture,' 'political culture,' 'civic,' or 'public culture'.<sup>1</sup>

However, and this is the contention of this article, in most democratization studies, the recognition of a cultural dimension to democracy tends to overlook a plurality of possible understandings of democracy (in turn reflected in locally distinct political cultures), the open-ended nature of the democratic idea and the role of imagination in democracy as well as the role of conflict in democratic (meta-) politics. Research on the new democracies reflects little on issues such as the differentiated development of cultural underpinnings of democracy, the dependence of political cultures on the specific cultural contexts in which democracies emerge, and the possible relation between contextual differences and different normative models. There is a certain predominance of a one-dimensional, Schumpeterian account of democracy. In this, the necessity of a supportive democratic political culture is presupposed, but its nature is widely understood in an aprioristic sense.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Dieter Fuchs and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, "Democratic Communities in Europe: A Comparison between East and West," in *Democracy and Political Culture in Eastern Europe*, ed. Hans-Dieter Klingemann et al. (London: Routledge, 2006), 25-66.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance: Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*. Significant exceptions are: John S. Dryzek and Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communist Democratization: Political Discourses across*

Here I argue that a pluralistic, cultural-sociological approach to democratic political culture would positively influence our understanding of the cultural dimensions of democratization. I therefore suggest a ‘multiple democracies’ approach in analysing the new EU member states, which understands Europeanization as including processes of politico-cultural differentiation.<sup>3</sup> The approach and its rationale will be briefly discussed below and some examples of the development of political cultures in the new democracies in East-Central Europe will be provided.

### Democratization and Political Culture

The conventional understanding of political culture relates democracy closely to a liberal, representative democratic regime in which politics is largely confined to a formalised political sphere, populated by political parties, and where political culture takes the role of a background culture which reflects the normative underpinnings of such an institutional order. On this view, political culture comprises values and orientations that eschew sharp conflict and endorse cooperation, moderation or self-restraint, trust, and lawful behaviour. A “genuine democratic political culture”,<sup>4</sup> according to democratization theorists, “embodies high levels of interpersonal trust, a readiness to deal with political conflict through compromise rather than coercion or violence, and acceptance of the legitimacy of democratic institutions.”<sup>5</sup>

The close linkage between an institutional order – that of a liberal-representative democracy – and a democratic political culture is, however, problematic. Conventional analyses of democratic political culture ignore three interrelated aspects that indicate the possibility of a differentiation of democratic political cultures as well as a strenuous relation between political cultures and the institutionalization of democratic politics:

- the historical and contextual nature of ‘really existing’ political cultures;
- the dual rather than singular ‘meta-imaginary’ of democracy on which democratic political cultures are based (i.e., a rights-based, constitutional imaginary, on the one hand, and a substantive, participatory, or

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*Thirteen Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Fuchs and Klingemann, “Democratic Communities in Europe”; Harald Wydra, *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> See Paul Blokker, *Multiple Democracies in Europe: Political Culture in New Member States* (London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Attila Ágh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 1998), 22.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce Parrott, “Perspectives on Postcommunist Democratization,” in *The Consolidation of Democracy in East-Central Europe*, ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 21.

- emancipatory imaginary, on the other);
- the inherent indeterminacy and contestability of modern democracy.

The risk of an a-historical, universalised, and one-dimensional perception of democracy lies in the negligence of the question of a significant variety between democratic political cultures, ultimately based on differing combinations of the dual dimension of constitutional order and civic participation/emancipation. A monist view tends to equate democratic political culture with a national liberal culture and in this to disregard historically contrasting pathways of democratization (a good example here are the classical cases of France and the United States), as well as the persistence of divergent perceptions of democracy within democracies, available in both the public sphere and political society.

In contrast to a monist view, democracy as an idea and practice is multi-interpretable and ‘essentially contestable.’ Therefore, the analysis of democratic political culture needs to go beyond a conceptualization that understands political culture as a (passive) internalization of the political system in individual attitudes and should be rather understood as involving the continuous (active) construction of different views of what democracy is – and ought to be – about. Paul Lichterman and Daniel Cefai provide a definition that can be a starting basis for going beyond the limited focus on liberal-representative democracy to include a variety of wider political claims. In their view, political culture consists of “the sets of symbols and meanings or styles of action that organise political claims-making and opinion-forming, by individuals or collectivities. By culture, we mean patterns of publicly shared symbols, meanings, or styles of action which enable and constrain what people can say and do.”<sup>6</sup>

The idea of multiple democracies entails that democratic political cultures can be conceptualised in different and sometimes mutually exclusive ways. Regarding the political reality of the new democracies, not only can it be argued that a range of perceptions of democracy and primary justifications among both elites and masses have been playing a role in the democratization processes, but also that the way democracies have been institutionalised remains potentially open to normative critique. As, early in the 1990s, Michael Walzer has argued with regard to a dual widespread commitment to both democratic government and to the politics of difference in the region: “[T]heir simultaneous success is bound to pluralize democracy in a radical way. It will produce a number of different ‘roads to democracy’ and a variety of ‘democracies’ at the end of the road – a prospect difficult to accept for those who believe that democracy is the single best form of

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<sup>6</sup> Paul Lichterman and Daniel Cefai, “The Idea of Political Culture,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 392.

government.”<sup>7</sup>

The delineation of a “genuine democratic political culture” as in the monist understanding becomes then a chimera. Democratic political culture can be understood as ‘produced’ in particular political struggles in distinct historical situations, based on cultural orientations ultimately grounded in the dual imaginary dimension of democracy. Political cultures (and their reflection in institutional constellations) rest upon the values and meanings that the relevant social agents invoke, reproduce as well as modify in the process. This, among others, means that any democratic political culture possibly also includes traditional, religious, as well as political-ethical components, and ultimately is not reducible to a ‘thin,’ liberal political culture that is generally supportive of an ‘objective’ liberal democratic order. But it also means that any democratic regime is always open to claims for the further democratization of democracy.

### Multiple Democracies and Democratic Ethics

As observed by Alessandro Ferrara, democracy cannot persevere and flourish if there is not also a ‘spirit of democracy’ that sustains democratic politics.<sup>8</sup> Ferrara elaborates on a number of basic democratic attitudes or cultural presuppositions of democracy that would make up a spirit of democracy: a passion for the public or the common good, a passion for equality, a passion for individuality, and a passion for openness. The upshot of these basic predispositions is that democratic regimes need their citizens and elites to pursue these passions to make democracy work over time.

An important and related question then becomes: is there only one spirit of democracy that reflects these passions or might we identify different spirits, or, at least, different combinations and emphases of passions in distinct democratic spirits? It seems right to affirm the second observation, in that even in the heartland of modernity, Western Europe and North America, differences in both a synchronic and diachronic sense can be observed. In the works of Charles Taylor and Michèle Lamont & Laurent Thévenot, differences in emphasis – regarding individuality, ideas of market competition, and solidarity – are elaborated with regard to France and the United States.<sup>9</sup>

What is more, it seems hard to deny that Western modern democracy has itself changed over time, in terms of its emphases on distinct passions. Today, democra-

<sup>7</sup> Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), ix-x; cf. Charles Taylor, “Cultures of Democracy and Citizen Efficacy,” *Public Culture* 19.1 (2007): 117-50.

<sup>8</sup> Alessandro Ferrara, *Democrazia e apertura* (Milan: Bruno Mondadori, 2011), 48.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor, “Cultures of Democracy and Citizen Efficacy”; Michèle Lamont and Laurent Thévenot, ed., *Rethinking Comparative Cultural Sociology: Repertoires of Evaluation in France and the United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).



cy is deemed to be in a moment of difficulty and this observation has led democratic theorists to look for new or renewed principles to re-invigorate democratic politics. As is well-known, one dimension of renovation is identified in terms of deliberation as a defining aspect of democracy. The latter can be related to Ferrara's passion for the public, that is, public reason as a fundamental element of democratic societies. Another important shift in democratic thinking is the re-interpretation of equality as recognition.<sup>10</sup>

In my own work, I have proposed a political and cultural-sociological approach to the analysis of democratic political cultures, which is grounded in the idea of a variety of 'ethics of democracy.'<sup>11</sup> Democratic political cultures can be identified on the basis of distinct patterns of cultural repertoires, themselves grounded in specific ethics of democracy. Ethics of democracy can be seen as orientating principles in two ways: in a normative sense as a guide to what is to be valued in a democratic regime and in a cognitive sense as an organising/structuring principle of democratic discourse, i.e., defining which political aspects/characteristics are relevant for realising a democratic regime. In my approach, I have derived these ethics from normative political theory, but they should not be taken to be exhaustive. The suggestion is that these democratic ethics are analytical ideal-types of modes of justification that will not be found in any pure sense in 'actually existing' democratic discourses. These ethics rather emerge in distinct combinations and hybrid ways and will be hierarchised or ordered in distinct ways in particular discourses as well as combined with other justificatory ideas.

In the case of the processes of democratization in East-Central Europe, four democratic ethics seem particularly relevant for an analysis of the political cultures that have emerged since 1989: the ethics of rights, of identity, of solidarity, and of participation. The first democratic ethic, the 'ethic of rights,' is about the priority of individual rights and the containment of political power by means of the rule of law. This ethic is close to an identification of democracy with the liberal model of constitutional democracy in its emphasis on individual rights, legal procedures, the equality of citizens before the law, and the eschewal of collectivist elements. The ethic of rights has clearly played a predominant role in the emergence of the new democracies, not least due to its centrality in the discourse of dissidents as well as in that of external actors, such as the European Union and the Council of Europe.

A second ethic is the 'ethic of identity,' based on a priority of commonality in terms of a defining historical, cultural, or linguistic identity or group boundaries and a related understanding of the common good. In other words, identity or commonality plays an important role in defining the in- and outsiders of a political community and explicates what the former have in common. The democratic di-

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<sup>10</sup> Ferrara, *Democrazia e apertura*, 49.

<sup>11</sup> Blokker, *Multiple Democracies in Europe*.

mension to identity is the idea that democratic politics can only work in a meaningful way if there is a sufficient basis in terms of a shared set of norms, values, and cultural capacities within a society.

This ethic of identity is invoked when a shared ‘thick’ identity (i.e., as grounded in language, common traditions, and history), and its continuous preservation and flourishing is understood as a significant aim of a democratic polity. An ethic of identity has been important in different ways in the emergence of all new democracies. Discourses related to the nation and national sovereignty have played a very important role in defining the novel identities of the political communities that have replaced the communist regimes. However, while some notion of commonality seems indispensable for a democratic regime (hence discussions regarding a European demos), this collectivist dimension can all too easily slip into a less democratic mode. The recent events in Hungary, where democratic politics grounded in a political culture emphasising liberal-legal aspects has been pushed into the defensive by the current centre-right government which seeks recourse to an alternative, identity-based political culture, are a case in point. The protection and strengthening of a distinct Hungarian identity – and related notions such as national sovereignty, nationality, national culture and religion – is professed to be the overriding aim of the current government, while individual rights, the rule of law, and constitutionalism have clearly become subordinated goals, threatening the democratic nature of the Hungarian political order.

A third ethic is the ‘ethic of self-rule,’ based on a priority of the idea of substantive participation. In the active, substantive conception of participation, popular sovereignty or democratic self-rule does not mean the transfer of sovereignty to an administering state, but self-rule is rather grounded in society and seen as an end in itself. In other words, a society is deemed democratic if there is a structural and meaningful way for citizens to participate in the rule-making of that society. This participatory dimension, which can in some ways be related to a republican idea of democracy, has played a major role in the dissident endeavour in the 1970s and 1980s and has had – in different ways and to different extents – some institutional repercussions, not least regarding local forms of democracy in the region.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the fourth ethic, the ‘ethic of distributive justice’ or ‘solidarity,’ is based on the priority of substantive, socio-economic equality and values such as equality for democratic participation. The democratic dimension here implies that citizen participation can be only meaningful if certain basic conditions have been fulfilled, in terms of livelihood and security. The solidarity dimension has played a role in the new democracies in that, for instance, social rights have been valued relatively highly throughout the region

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<sup>12</sup> See: Paul Blokker, “Dissidence, Republicanism, and Democratic Change,” *East European Politics and Societies* 25.2 (2011): 219–43.

In my research on East-Central Europe, plurality became clear from a concise survey of political elite discourses in three countries in twenty years of democratization. The political cultural composites of three new democracies, as expressed by political elites, can be concisely designated as a legalistic-communitarian one (Hungary), a civic rights-religious one (Poland), and a communitarian-Europeanist one (Romania). A democratic discourse informed by an ethic of rights could be found in all three new democracies. In Hungary, the balance has now shifted, in that the predominance of a rights-based discourse, grounded in the notions of a *Rechtsstaat* and the rule of law, and also reflected in the constitution, is now the object of a political counterproject, which is grounded in a culturalist-communitarian view of democracy, with authoritarian overtones and with clearly negative repercussions for the rights-based understanding of democracy. In Poland, a democratic discourse based on the ethic of rights has been continuously challenged by a communitarian-religious discourse emphasising an alternative grounding of fundamental rights and democracy. But in the Polish case, there also seems to be potential for compromise and the recognition of diversity. In Romania, while an ethic of rights was clearly secondary to an ethic of identity in the early 1990s, by the late 2000s, rights and the rule of law have clearly become more vigorous and there are signs of their predominance as a democratic discourse.

## Conclusion

The democratic ethics described above should not be taken as exhaustive. Indeed, various ethics gaining in importance and visibility could be added, such as an ethic of deliberation or an ethic of critique, indicating shifting priorities and justifications in modern democracies. But, at the same time, the openness of democracy is clearly also not unlimited. Modern democratic political cultures do refer to different basic justifications for democracy. In this sense, by supposing a variety of democratic ethics at work, a multiple democracies approach highlights the pluralism in European political culture and explores cultural patterns that combine elements on which different political-cultural composites are based. By referring to different, coexisting, and unevenly available ethics or cultural repertoires within national societies, it is possible to establish patterns of repertoires that are more readily available in some societies than in others. In this, a multiple democracies approach proposes an interpretative theory of a variety of democratic forms and cultures.

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# The European Court of Justice between Cosmopolitanism and National Identity

Herman Voogsgeerd

## Introduction

The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has had a dramatic influence on the creation of European law. With its cases on the direct effect and supremacy of European law, it really laid the basis for the autonomous character of this branch of the law. This must have been an unintended consequence that even the authors of the EEC Treaty did not foresee. Some academic authors submit that the ECJ was acting at the brink of judicial activism.<sup>1</sup> Others maintain that the ECJ is not a political actor.<sup>2</sup> In this article, I will try to find out whether the ECJ promoted some specific cosmopolitan values and/or values related to national identity. In her research on culture and European law, Craufurd Smith tried to answer the question whether there are specific Community values and she maintains that “particular social values were embedded in the EEC Treaty from the start.” She mentions explicitly the prohibition on discrimination on the basis of nationality and the right to equal pay for men and women.<sup>3</sup> Although I doubt whether these values are specifically European, they have been defended rigorously by the ECJ. More generally, the law of the internal market has had an enormous influence on the cultural and social values of the member states. According to Sauter and Schepel, the internal market is imposed by the ECJ on the member states.<sup>4</sup> This internal market law has huge consequences for almost all areas. In my article, I will study the consequences of this internal market law (and the law on European citizenship) for the protection of cosmopolitanism on the one hand and that of national identity on the other. Will it be possible to strike a balance between these two values?

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<sup>1</sup> Hjalte Rasmussen, *On Law and Policy in the European Court of Justice: A Comparative Study in Judicial Policymaking* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Andreas Grimm, “Integration and the Context of Law: Why the European Court of Justice Is Not a Political Actor,” *Les Cahiers Européens de Sciences Po.* 03 (2011): 2-26.

<sup>3</sup> Rachael Craufurd Smith, ed. *Culture and European Union Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 45.

<sup>4</sup> Wolf Sauter and Harm Schepel, *State and Market in European Union Law: The Public and Private Spheres of the Internal Market before the EU Courts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 11.

### The Link between European Law and Identity?

Many authors have tried to forge a link between European law on the one hand and the concept of identity on the other. Mayer and Palmowski stress the role of EU institutions and European law through which European identities have come to be expressed.<sup>5</sup> Because there is no meaningful common European historical identification, the institutions and laws are almost the only source for attention. These authors see a role for the EU institutions in the promotion of identification(s) with the EU. The main mechanisms for this promotion they see are a distinctive European citizenship and the strengthening of supranational institutions per se in Europe. Guild also focuses on European citizenship as a new 'legal' element of European identity.<sup>6</sup>

In general, Mayer and Palmowski claim that European law, and therefore also the decisions of the ECJ, express "what Europe is and what it aspires to be."<sup>7</sup> They even go a step further: in creating individual and fundamental laws, the ECJ has become "pivotal in helping to articulate substantive aspects of a European identity."<sup>8</sup> The authors assume that these rights are primordial in bringing about a separate sense of European identity. The problem is that these rights are not used by everybody. The number of workers enjoying the free movement of workers within the EU got stuck between 2 and 3% of the working population. Other freedoms, such as the right to establishment by independent persons and the right to posted work within the framework of the free movement of services, are more popular. Concerning these freedoms, some tensions arise between the persons enjoying their free movement rights and the people who do not move and who stay in their own member state.

In order to sustain the next stage in the building of a European identity, Perju is of the opinion that a 'discursive turn' in European law is needed. The link between European law and the 'European public' in the member states in general needs to be strengthened. This stage could be reached through a change of style of the ECJ. The decisions of the ECJ will get more attention among the general public if case debates on case-law are stimulated. According to Perju, this could be done through the introduction of so-called dissenting opinions: individual judges having another opinion than the majority.<sup>9</sup> While this last suggestion might be too much of a break with the existing tradition, the argument of more discussion concerning case-law of the ECJ is a correct one.

<sup>5</sup> Franz C. Mayer and Jan Palmowski, "European Identities and the EU: The Ties that Bind the Peoples of Europe," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42.3 (2004): 573-98.

<sup>6</sup> Elspeth Guild, *The Legal Elements of European Identity: EU Citizenship and Migration Law* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Mayer and Palmowski, "European Identities and the EU," 587.

<sup>8</sup> Mayer and Palmowski, "European Identities and the EU," 589.

<sup>9</sup> Vlad Perju, "Reason and Authority in the European Court of Justice," *Virginia Journal of International Law* 94.2 (2009): 338-44.

Former judge Koopmans was already in 1986 of the opinion that the “role of law in the next stage of European Integration” could be different.<sup>10</sup> He means that the role of law in European integration will be characterised more by the essential ‘peace-making function’ of the law than by the instrumental conception of the law. Landmark decisions such as *Van Gend & Loos* (26/62) and *Costa/ENEL* (6/64) in the beginning of the 1960s were, indeed, instrumental in bringing about a coherent unitary common market. In the new stage, however, the interests of the member states could also be protected in a better way.

This argument that the EU institutions and the ECJ have contributed to some of the substantive aspects of European identity is interesting. By strengthening their own prerogatives, the EU institutions promote identification of the peoples with the EU. I agree with these statements. Law and identity are interrelated. Law is communication that may easily enter the domain of culture. Now, after more than sixty years of experience with European law, this branch of the law has become part of the general discourse, at least among the elites. Culture itself can be transformed by EU law.

### The Role of Identity in the Original Doctrine of European Law

In the early years of the common market, it was not at all clear that there was a relation between European Community law and a concept such as identity. One of the most influential authors in European law has been the German professor Hans Peter Ipsen. It is said that in formulating the basic concepts of direct effect and supremacy of European Law, the ECJ has been influenced by his thoughts. Ipsen sees the European Communities (EEC, ECSC and Euratom) as so-called ‘special purpose associations’ (*Zweckverbände*). An important characteristic of these associations is their technocratic nature. The tasks and competencies attributed to the EC level have to be handled in a technocratic and bureaucratic way. When member states are not able anymore to fulfil certain tasks, a European bureaucracy is needed. This technocratic way is also the most efficient.<sup>11</sup> According to Ipsen, there is no need for the European construction to deal with ‘difficult’ aspects like identity, national anthems, flags etc.<sup>12</sup> The functions the Communities perform do not belong to the irrational field. Special purpose associations are not *Gefühlsverbände* or ‘special emotional associations.’<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Tijmen Koopmans, “The Role of Law in the Next Stage of European Integration,” *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 35.4 (1986): 925-31.

<sup>11</sup> Hans Peter Ipsen, *Europäisches Gemeinschaftsrecht* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1972), 1045.

<sup>12</sup> Hans Peter Ipsen, *Europäisches Gemeinschaftsrecht in Einzelstudien* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1984), 198.

<sup>13</sup> See also Herman Voogsgeerd, “A Reappraisal of H.-P. Ipsen’s ‘Zweckverband’: Unidentified Finality as an Essential Element of a European Political Identity?,” *SPIEL: Siegener Periodicum zur internationalen empirischen Literaturwissenschaft* 21.2 (2002): 313-26.

Although it is difficult nowadays to continue to uphold the idea of Europe as a technocratic, special purpose association that should not deal with ‘difficult’ issues such as identity, the idea is still interesting. The importance of the member states in the idea of the single purpose associations implies that national identities should not be harmed too much. Essential in the special purpose associations is a process of disentanglement of the state, a progress in integration or ‘doing things in common,’ and this leaves unimpaired much of the identity of the individual member states. It is the view of Ipsen that the states open up, not that the identity of the states is threatened.<sup>14</sup>

After sixty years of experience with the common market, a rudimentary European identity did arise, however. Mayer and Palmowski emphasise the individual and fundamental rights of citizens and the existence of the European institutions as proof of a European identity. Essential in their concept is that the European identity is a separate one from the identities of the different member states. Delanty has tried to clarify the relationship between national and European identity; according to this author, these identities are not inseparable.<sup>15</sup> In the same way as Mayer and Palmowski, he tries to find some distinctive elements of a European identity. One important element in the search of Delanty is the contrast between particularism and universalism. National identity is particularistic and a European identity is universalistic.<sup>16</sup>

European law and the decisions of the ECJ play an important role in this respect in that they ‘open’ national laws and identities. These laws and identities become permeable. Openness in this context refers to the lack of a ‘finalité’ in the European integration concept. It also refers to the possibility of a learning process, if more people will make use of the four freedoms and go to work and/or reside in another member state. This learning process is not directly caused but facilitated by the decisions of the ECJ. The people who make use of one of the four freedoms are the potential objects of this learning process. The ECJ at the most facilitates this process. It is now time to look at some recent typical decisions of the ECJ between cosmopolitanism and national identity. How is the balance between these two established?

### **The Case-Law of the ECJ and Cosmopolitan Values and National Identity**

Before I will analyse some cases of the ECJ, the notion of cosmopolitan values will have to be addressed. Cosmopolitanism is the opposite of patriotism or national-

<sup>14</sup> Hans Peter Ipsen, *Europäisches Gemeinschaftsrecht in Einzelstudien* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1984), 92 and 93.

<sup>15</sup> Gerard Delanty, “The Transformation of National Identity and the Cultural Ambivalence of European Identity: Democratic Identification in a Post-National Europe,” *SPIEL: Siegener Periodicum zur internationalen empirischen Literaturwissenschaft* 14.1 (1995): 23.

<sup>16</sup> Delanty, “The Transformation of National Identity,” 29.



ism. Inclusiveness is important in this respect: people of all kinds of ethnic or religious communities are allowed to participate. Cosmopolitanism might need an overarching structure such as a political community or an economic relationship. In the EU, the internal market, the Economic and Monetary Union, could function as such an overarching structure. Essential for cosmopolitanism is, however, to acknowledge difference in society, especially with respect to cultural background.<sup>17</sup>

It is in the fields of non-discrimination on the basis of nationality and European citizenship that the ECJ has contributed enormously to the European integration process. The case law concerning the four freedoms, e.g. the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital, has become the linchpin of the European construction. Member-states authorities were forced to take into account the special situation of migrant persons from another member state. The term substantive or indirect discrimination was coined in this respect by the ECJ. Substantive discrimination was introduced in the area of the free movement of goods and means that equal treatment of unequal situations is also contrary to the principle of equal treatment (on the basis of nationality). Later on, the concept of nationality was not used anymore. The ECJ used a different criterion: discrimination or an obstacle to free movement of goods or persons was supposed to be there in case a cross-border situation was treated differently by a national measure than a purely national or sedentary situation.<sup>18</sup> This wide concept made it possible to detect many different kinds of hidden treatments of migrant workers.

Groenendijk is rather optimistic on “forty years of free movement of workers.”<sup>19</sup> According to him, aliens have been transformed into co-citizens with rights, thanks to the case-law of the ECJ. The ECJ focused on the integration of the migrant worker and his family in the host state. Access to education in the host state and social advantages of the host state for the worker and his family were rights that were mentioned in regulations but widely interpreted by the ECJ. Groenendijk thinks free movement of workers also has had a symbolic message and that the public perception of migrants has become more positive.<sup>20</sup> Posting of workers within the framework of free movement of services on the other hand sometimes arouses tensions, because social dumping and cheap labour from Central and Eastern Europe are not excluded. Full equal treatment with citizens from Western European host member states is not necessarily safeguarded. The operation of the European internal market as a whole is taken as a base of reference by the ECJ.

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<sup>17</sup> Ulrich Beck and Edgar Grande, *Das kosmopolitische Europa* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 27.

<sup>18</sup> See for example case C-349/87 (*Paraschi*) on social security.

<sup>19</sup> Kees Groenendijk, “Forty Years of Free Movement of Workers: Has It Been A Success and Why?,” in *Rethinking the Free Movement of Workers: The European Challenges Ahead*, ed. Paul Minderhoud and Nicos Trimikliniotis (Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers, 2009), 15.

<sup>20</sup> Groenendijk, “Forty Years of Free Movement of Workers,” 19.

Craufurd Smith submits that the ECJ starts from the premise of advantages of exposure to other cultures. Insulation of domestic traditions will not be permitted. The consumers can choose themselves what sort of product or tradition they want to buy.<sup>21</sup> The ECJ does not mandate cultural change, only openness to change. The common market promotes a culture of consumer choice. Therefore, the influence of the ECJ on identity can be considered as deep but indirect.

Recently, the topic of national identity has become more important in the cases of the ECJ. According to the Treaty on the European Union, the EU has to respect the ‘national identity’ of its member states (art. 4, par. 2 TEU). This includes the political and constitutional structures and the essential functions of the state in the field of security and public order. Already in the 1990s, the ECJ respected a wide margin of discretion for the authorities of a member state as regards, for example, the control of lotteries. This line of argumentation became strengthened in the *Omega* case (C-36/02), where a company in gambling machines operating a ‘laserdrome’ protested against a banning order from the mayor of Bonn. The mayor reacted to opposition from the public against that specific machine playing “to kill people.” According to the German court, this machine was against “human dignity,” a concept derived from the first article of the German constitution. The German court referred the matter to the ECJ. The ECJ accepted that “the specific circumstances which may justify recourse to the concept of public policy may vary from one country to another and from one era to another” (par. 31). Now that only the game “to kill humans” was banned, this ban did not go too far and was acceptable from the viewpoint of European law. On the one hand, the concept of public policy is under the scrutiny of the ECJ. On the other hand, there is respect for national traditions and identity in sensitive public order areas.

Even more straightforward is the case *Sayn-Wittgenstein* (C-208/09). Here, another reference to the national constitutional identity was honoured. An Austrian law on the abolition of the nobility was upheld against an Austrian national, who got a title as princess recognized (by mistake) in Germany where she operated a company in the luxury real estate sector and also resided. The ECJ accepts that the law “as an element of national identity” is an important element to be taken into account. After extensive references to the *Omega* case and art. 4, par. 2 of the TEU, the ECJ does not deem the refusal of the Austrian authorities to recognise the noble element of the name of Sayn-Wittgenstein to be a disproportionate measure. Now that the Austrian law is of constitutional status and also implemented the principle of equality in Austria, an important principle of European law as well, the refusal was acceptable. This recent case-law implies that national (constitutional) identity is a factor of importance, even in the situation of balancing internal market rights with public interests. It is submitted that this looks like a change of focus in the jurisprudence of the ECJ.

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<sup>21</sup> Craufurd Smith, *Culture and European Union Law*, 29-31.

## Conclusion

The important and large body of case-law concerning the internal market and European citizenship has changed Europe. It facilitated cosmopolitan values within the internal market. Recently, we have seen increasing respect for national (constitutional) identity, especially in the area of public order. The decision in the case *Sayn-Wittgenstein* is certainly proof of this new approach, partly to be explained by article 4, par 2 of the Treaty on the European Union and maybe partly by the Lisbon decision of the German Constitutional Court of 30 June 2009, in which respect for cultural, historical and linguistic elements was demanded from the EU.

At the end of this contribution, it is possible to conclude that the decisions of the ECJ concerning the internal market and European citizenship have triggered several developments. Although these can only be seen from a long term perspective, it is possible to see examples of changes in European identities. The ECJ has definitively contributed to these developments. In order to remain successful, the ECJ must also pay attention to and respect national identities. It is dangerous to juxtapose European and national identities. The social experimentation and the learning process that is the consequence of a well-functioning internal market bring about changes to these national identities. The ECJ has played a huge role as a final broker in offering options to migrants and free-movers. In order to remain influential and to safeguard successful diffusion of its decisions in the near future, the ECJ will have to remain sensitive to cultural pluralism within the EU.

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### Case-law of the European Court of Justice

- European Court Reports* (1991): page I-4501 (*Paraschi*).
- European Court Reports* (2004): page I-6213 (*Omega*).
- European Court Reports* (2010): not yet reported (*Sayn-Wittgenstein*).

# The United Kingdom and the European Union

## The Shaping of Public Opinion

Bianca Polo Del Vecchio

### Introduction

As the scope and depth of European integration grows, it is increasingly necessary to understand the impact of membership of the European Union on member states – a phenomenon known as ‘Europeanization’.<sup>1</sup> Europeanization is a dynamic process, bringing change to domestic institutions, policies and politics.<sup>2</sup> The impact of EU membership on member states is not uniform and the United Kingdom, like all EU member states, has a unique experience of membership. This differential impact can be accounted for by the ‘goodness of fit’ of domestic institutions, policies and processes with those of the EU, and by other variables specific to each member state.<sup>3</sup>

Striking, in the case of the UK, is the overall reluctance of governments to accept further integration and the consistently low levels of public support for EU membership. At a meeting of the European Council in December 2011, Prime Minister David Cameron opposed treaty reform deemed necessary to bring an end to the current sovereign debt crisis. This isolationist stance followed only two months after his defeat of a rebellion from within his own Conservative Party, which called for a referendum on the UK’s membership of the EU. Eurobarometre polls show that UK public attitudes towards the EU are among the most negative,<sup>4</sup> while the Eurosceptic Conservative Party and the anti-EU United Kingdom Independence Party came first and second respectively in the 2009 European Par-

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<sup>1</sup> Markus Jachtenfuchs, “The Governance Approach to European Integration,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39.2 (2001): 250.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Ladrech, “Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 32.1 (1994): 70.

<sup>3</sup> Tanja A. Börzel, “Europeanization: How the European Union Interacts with its Member States,” in *The Member States of the European Union*, ed. Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 50.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, “Standard Eurobarometer 76: Table of Results (2011),” [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb76/eb76\\_anx\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb76/eb76_anx_en.pdf) (accessed 1 March 2012).

liament elections.<sup>5</sup> With voter turnout at just 35%, these election results indicate the UK public tends towards Euroscepticism but is also largely disinterested in the EU.

One might think that this Euroscepticism results from a poor fit of the UK's institutions, policies and processes with those of the EU, causing EU membership to have a greater impact on it than on other member states. However, although institutional and policy 'misfit' is undoubtedly an important factor, there are a number of variables specific to the UK that can account for a commonplace sense of 'otherness.' This paper seeks to rationalise negative public attitudes towards the EU by considering key cultural, historical, political and economic particularities.

### The Shaping of Public Opinion

David Easton's theory of support for political institutions identifies two dimensions that can be used in order to explain attitudes towards European integration.<sup>6</sup> The affective dimension reflects support based on an ideological association with the EU, while the utilitarian dimension reflects support based on a calculation of the costs and benefits of membership. Matthew Gabel shows that, throughout the EU, support is increasingly based on the utilitarian dimension, and this is particularly so in the UK.<sup>7</sup> As emotional, affective factors seem to have little positive bearing on UK public opinion, support for integration is more dependent on a favourable utilitarian calculation.

Only one-third of the UK public feels that the benefits of EU membership exceed the economic costs.<sup>8</sup> Important to note, however, is the extent to which respondents tend to over-estimate the UK's contribution to the EU budget. Only 1 in 10 members of the public correctly estimate the UK's financial contribution as being equal to or under 3% of GNI. The remainder either over-estimate – the average estimation is 19% of GNI – or have no knowledge of the size of this contribution.<sup>9</sup> This is especially significant as there is a clear link between over-estimation and consistently negative views on the EU.<sup>10</sup> A similar observation can be made concerning the influence of the UK on EU decision-making. Although almost half of respondents feel that the UK has a lot or quite a lot of political influence, if it were known that the UK always has a say over legislative outcomes

<sup>5</sup> European Parliament, "Results by Country (2009)," [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/00082fcd21/Results-by-country-\(2009\).html?tab=27](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/aboutparliament/en/00082fcd21/Results-by-country-(2009).html?tab=27) (accessed 1 March 2012).

<sup>6</sup> David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965).

<sup>7</sup> Matthew J. Gabel, *Interests and Integration: Market Liberalization, Public Opinion, and European Union* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> European Commission, "Flash Eurobarometer 318: Attitudes Towards the EU in the United Kingdom (2010)," 13, [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_318\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_318_en.pdf) (accessed 1 March 2012).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

almost 60% of the public would feel more positively about the UK's EU membership.<sup>11</sup> Not only is the public's *actual* level of understanding of the economic and political costs and benefits of membership low, they *perceive* their level of understanding of the EU to be low.<sup>12</sup> Again, this is of importance as there is a connection between low levels of perceived understanding and negative attitudes towards the EU.

Of course relatively negative public attitudes towards the European Union are not simply due to the results of utilitarian calculations made using erroneous information. The affective dimension can have a considerable impact on calculations of the costs and benefits as the two dimensions are interlinked.<sup>13</sup> In a number of ways, the UK differs notably from other EU member states and, when taken together, these differences can account for low levels of ideological, affective support for the EU, and thus impact on overall attitudes towards the EU. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) identify two political 'cleavages' – national-territorial and transnational-socioeconomic – which can account for the differing interests and preferences of political actors.<sup>14</sup> Simon Hix suggests that, in the context of the EU, national divisions are more relevant than socio-economic ones.<sup>15</sup>

A key factor in understanding ideological association with the EU is identity. Antonia M. Ruiz Jiménez et al. have shown that, in principle, even strong national identities are compatible with a sense of European identity.<sup>16</sup> This is because, whereas national identities tend to be defined in cultural terms, European identities are usually based on instrumental, self-interested considerations. However, the importance of pride and sovereignty to the strong British national identity make it much less compatible with a complimentary sense of European identity. This incompatibility is reflected in survey results, which show that, whereas almost half of EU respondents feel either very or a little attached to the EU, only 1 in 4 members of the UK public feels in any way attached.<sup>17</sup> The geographical situation of the UK as an island on the periphery of Europe is undoubtedly a contributing factor. UK residents tend to have less frequent direct contact with other EU citizens, contact which might allow them to discern similarities.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 16-7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>13</sup> Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis*.

<sup>14</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavages Structures, Party Systems and Voter Alignments: An Introduction," in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-national Perspectives*, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (New York: Free Press, 1967).

<sup>15</sup> Simon Hix, *The Political System of the European Union*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 148.

<sup>16</sup> Antonia M. Ruiz Jiménez et al., "European and National Identities in EU's Old and New Member States: Ethnic, Civic, Instrumental and Symbolic Components," *European Integration On-line Papers* 8.11 (2004), <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2004-011.htm> (accessed 1 March 2012).

<sup>17</sup> European Commission, "Standard Eurobarometer 68 (2008)," [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb\\_68\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb68/eb_68_en.pdf) (accessed 1 March 2012).

The UK's status as a former dominant power has been fundamental in shaping its identity and interests. Due to its economic strength, military force and political stability, the UK was the dominant colonial power throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it emerged from the Second World War as one of the three big powers of the victorious alliance.<sup>18</sup> The UK has sought to retain a strong global role, and the perceived existence of alternative means to secure influence, through the Commonwealth and in partnership with the United States, facilitated the UK's decision not to join the Communities at the time of their founding. Since accession, successive governments have been unwilling to choose between prioritising the UK's relationship with the EU or with the US and have instead sought to satisfy and influence both, which has impeded the UK from fully engaging in European integration.<sup>19</sup> Here, again, the importance of the geographical situation of the UK should not be under-estimated as it is partly as a result of its situation that, throughout history, the UK's attention has often been focused on other continents.

Whereas World War II highlighted the failings of the nation-state for many in Europe, for the UK the nation-state was strengthened. The founding member states stood to gain more from the 'peace dividend' that integration was to bring since the human, physical and political costs of war had been greater for them than for the UK.<sup>20</sup> With a long history of democratic stability, the UK did not rely on integration to strengthen its domestic institutions.<sup>21</sup> In fact, as Jeffrey Anderson shows, old democracies with strong institutions tend to be more resistant to change.<sup>22</sup> And, as noted by Robert Rohrschneider, the perceived democratic deficit of the EU's institutions tends to have a greater impact on public opinion in such states.<sup>23</sup> Compared to the long-established and familiar institutions of the UK state, the institutions of the EU are intangible and illegitimate in the eyes of the public.

A key political difference between member states is the majoritarian and consensual characteristics of their political systems. Arend Lijphart identifies the features of majoritarian and consensual regimes along two dimensions: the horizontal executive-parties dimension and the vertical federal-unitary dimension, the UK being strongly majoritarian on both dimensions.<sup>24</sup> Lijphart suggests that, as the EU is a more consensual political system, member states with similar political systems

<sup>18</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire* (London: Abacus, 1994).

<sup>19</sup> Michael Moran, *Politics and Governance in the UK* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 34-7; Hix, *The Political System of the European Union*, 157.

<sup>20</sup> Gabel, *Interests and Integration*.

<sup>21</sup> Hix, *The Political System of the European Union*, 155.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey J. Anderson, "Europeanization and the Transformation of the Democratic Polity, 1945-2000," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40.5 (2002): 814.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Rohrschneider, "The Democracy Deficit and Mass Support for an EU-Wide Government," *American Journal of Political Science* 46.2 (2002).

<sup>24</sup> Arend Lijphart, *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-One Countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).



should experience less difficulty adapting to membership. It would follow, therefore, that the British political elite, accustomed to a majoritarian domestic political system characterised by a small number of political parties and a tendency for single party governments, and centralised power, should have greater difficulty adjusting to the EU's consensual decision-making process.

Nevertheless, the UK Executive has adapted well to EU membership. This is in line with George Tsebelis's theory of veto players, which holds that member states with a low number of formal decision-makers adapt with greater ease to the requirements of membership.<sup>25</sup> In the case of the UK Executive, adaptation has been facilitated by the UK's centralized coordination system and the fact that single party governments are the norm, lessening the need for domestic inter-departmental bargaining.<sup>26</sup> The UK Parliament, on the other hand, has not easily adapted to EU membership. Hussein Kassim shows that for this strong parliament the absolute and relative loss of power has been considerable.<sup>27</sup> The impact on the UK Parliament is compounded by the importance of the principle of parliamentary sovereignty to the UK constitution, which conflicts with the principle of the supremacy of EU Law.<sup>28</sup>

Hix shows that, in the UK, attitudes towards the EU are heavily influenced by the position of the political party an individual supports, and therefore public opinion has been heavily influenced by the increase in political Euroscepticism.<sup>29</sup> Parliamentarians, like all political actors, have interests and preferences they seek to promote. Given the impact of EU membership on the UK Parliament, it is unsurprising that Members of Parliament tend to be at best hesitant in expressing their support for European integration and at worst openly Eurosceptic. The absence of informative public debate on EU membership has left a void that has been filled by Eurosceptic discourse.

Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party, which had been marginalised since the 1960s, was legitimised by Margaret Thatcher's increasingly confrontational approach to the EU from the mid-1980s. Eurosceptic sentiment was strengthened by the arduous ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and the UK's humiliating exit from the Exchange Rate Mechanism in the early 1990s.<sup>30</sup> Despite the evolu-

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<sup>25</sup> George Tsebelis, "Veto Players and Law Production in Parliamentary Democracies: An Empirical Analysis," *American Political Science Review* 93.3 (1999).

<sup>26</sup> Moran, *Politics and Governance in the UK*, 100; Andrew Geddes, *The European Union and British Politics* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 166.

<sup>27</sup> Hussein Kassim, "The Europeanization of Member State Institutions," in *The Member States of the European Union*, ed. Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 298.

<sup>28</sup> Troels B. Hansen and Bruno Scholl, "Europeanization and Domestic Parliamentary Adaptation: A Comparative Analysis of the Bundestag and the House of Commons," *European Integration On-line Papers* 6.15 (2002), <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2002-015.htm> (accessed 1 March 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Hix, *The Political System of the European Union*, 156.

<sup>30</sup> Geddes, *The European Union and British Politics*, 195-205.

tion of the Labour Party's position during the 1980s from one of opposition to membership to support for active engagement, the governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown failed to make a convincing case to the public for a more positive EU policy.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the Eurosceptic message of the Conservative Party, which is reinforced by that of the increasingly popular UKIP, has been more forceful than any pro-EU message of the Labour Party. Even in government, the pro-EU Liberal Democrat Party has failed to temper the typically Eurosceptic discourse of the Conservative Party.

As a populous, wealthy member state, the UK is one of the main contributors to the EU budget and also a net contributor. However, that the UK is a net contributor can also be explained by the fact that a high proportion of the EU budget is allocated to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), of which the UK is not a major beneficiary due to the relatively small size of its agricultural sector.<sup>32</sup> The CAP is perceived as a wasteful policy by many in the UK and this is a key reason offered by successive UK governments, faced with mounting opposition from other member states, to justify the continued payment of the rebate negotiated in 1984. The maintenance of this rebate is presented as a matter of vital national interest, which serves to perpetuate the notion that the UK has less to gain from EU membership than other states.

A further difference of the UK economy is the importance of its financial services sector. The City of London has historically been a predominant financial centre and successive governments have attached much importance to its interests, resisting, in particular, increased regulation emanating from the EU. The UK's former status as the leading global economic power, with the Pound Sterling as the foremost international currency, has surely influenced opinion on Economic and Monetary Union and the loss of sovereignty that participation entails. More recently, experience of the Exchange Rate Mechanism between 1990 and 1992 has reinforced negative attitudes of both the political elite and the public towards adoption of the Euro.<sup>33</sup> Today, only 15% of the UK public supports a single currency<sup>34</sup> and opponents feel their reluctance has been vindicated by the crisis engulfing the Eurozone. Besides, Paul De Grauwe shows that there are certain key differences between the UK and Eurozone economies, including greater flexibility of the labour market and heavier reliance on bond and equity markets for finance in the former, which suggest that the UK might benefit less from adopting the Euro than other states.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 89

<sup>32</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, "The Common Agricultural Policy Explained," [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/capexplained/cap\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/publi/capexplained/cap_en.pdf) (accessed 3 March 2012).

<sup>33</sup> Geddes, *The European Union and British Politics*, 143-5.

<sup>34</sup> European Commission, "Standard Eurobarometer 76," 66.

<sup>35</sup> Paul De Grauwe, *Economics of Monetary Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 101-2.

A final particularity to be highlighted is the role of the UK press in shaping public opinion. The high concentration of ownership and the relatively wide circulation of national daily newspapers allow this medium great influence. Given the important role played by the daily press in fostering a sense of national unity<sup>36</sup> and in light of the fact that four, generally Eurosceptic, newspaper groups produce three-quarters of the 11 million national newspapers sold each day in the UK,<sup>37</sup> the ability of the press to accentuate perceived differences should not be underestimated. Furthermore, most of the daily newspapers sold in the UK are tabloids that do not offer in-depth analysis of EU affairs and rely on eye-catching and sometimes misleading headlines to draw the public's attention in what is an increasingly competitive market. The UK's island location means residents have less frequent experience of the day-to-day benefits of EU membership and thus their reliance on the predominantly Eurosceptic press for information is greater.

## Conclusion

The institutions, policies and processes of all member states are subject to pressure for change as a result of EU membership, which might have a negative impact on public attitudes towards the EU. The reaction of the UK public to EU membership has, however, been particularly negative. It has been shown that, on the one hand, the impact of and reaction to membership is, to a considerable extent, due to substantial 'misfit' of UK institutions, policies and processes with those of the EU. On the other hand, it has been established that there are a number of factors quite specific to the UK, which shape public opinion on the EU to a significant extent.

The public's lack of understanding of the functioning of the EU mars its ability to assess the benefits of membership. The importance of pride and sovereignty to the strong sense of British identity coupled with nostalgia for an era of global influence make it difficult for the UK public to connect with and to commit to a European destiny. The public's attachment to the narrative of the UK as an old, stable democracy with a historically strong and liberal economy leaves it susceptible to the increasingly Eurosceptic discourse of its politicians and the press. This sense of 'otherness' is further reinforced by the UK's geographical location on the periphery of mainland Europe. All of these factors have contributed to what might be considered as a stalled process of Europeanization in the UK.

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<sup>36</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), cited in Andrew Geddes, *The European Union and British Politics* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 220.

<sup>37</sup> Charles Grant, "Why is Britain Eurosceptic?" *Centre for European Reform* (2008), 3, [http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2011/essay\\_eurosceptic\\_19dec08-1345.pdf](http://www.cer.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/attachments/pdf/2011/essay_eurosceptic_19dec08-1345.pdf) (accessed 3 March 2012).

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# From a Traumatic Past to a Constructive Future

## The Spanish Transition Period as a Case Study

Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz

### Introduction: Armed Conflicts and Collective Trauma

Up to the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, few areas around the globe have been as full of discord and violence-ridden as Europe. Especially from the early modern period on, the Old World has been swept and scarred by wars and conflict that have had a definite influence on the positions, formation-processes, alliances, and power relations among the different nations.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult, in fact, to find any single historical moment in which Europe was completely at peace. Due sometimes to class inequalities, at other times to religious tensions, and still at others to geo-political and ideological disputes, the truth is that human aggression has been a constant in the history of the continent for at least as long as our memory allows us to remember.<sup>2</sup> To name only a few of these sad historical occasions, one could mention the War of the Roses (15<sup>th</sup> century.), the French Wars of Religion (16<sup>th</sup> century.), the Thirty Years' War (17<sup>th</sup> century.), the French Revolution (18<sup>th</sup> century.), the Italian Independence War (19<sup>th</sup> century.), or the two World Wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These disruptive events usually took place on European battlefields but, almost as often, they were also extended to faraway territories and involved populations that had little knowledge of the origins and goals of the conflicts.

There is no question that the most dramatic consequences produced by armed conflicts are usually gauged according to the number of casualties and the material destruction they have caused among the contenders. However, as conflict and trauma specialists have pointed out, violent events of this kind are also bound to shatter the individual and collective sense of well-being and security of the participants. As a result, they are invariably going to make efforts to change the situation

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<sup>1</sup> Johan Galtung, *Europe in the Making* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1989), 7-21.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Gilpin, *War and Changes in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), especially chapter 1. Gilpin's views on conflict and power relations are deeply indebted to Edward Hallett Carr's, particularly as they are articulated in *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1951).

that triggered these events – or, alternatively, to try to forget them.<sup>3</sup> Neal notes that, because the contenders in a conflict tend to become more reasonable once the violence is over, traumatic events frequently lead to advances and progress.<sup>4</sup> In his opinion, “the very fact that a disruptive event has occurred [means that] new opportunities will emerge for innovation and change.”<sup>5</sup> The American Civil War and World War II are often cited as examples of highly traumatic historical occasions that fostered positive changes in some of the societies that suffered them. Yet, it would be naïve to assume that this recovery of stability indicates a complete disappearance of the resentful memories and pent-up animosities that those violent events generated. In this regard, Aguilar believes that the Spanish Civil War is a case in point since, after two decades of “willful forgetting,” the democratic maturity of the country and its capacity to absorb all those intense emotions are still being tested.<sup>6</sup> According to Caruth, traumatic events are characterized by their unassimilated nature and by the fact that they are unwittingly re-enacted by the victims, even when those victims try to leave them behind.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, a society or community can only aspire to look into the future unburdened by past resentment and emotional restraints if it manages to restore objective memory by lifting all sorts of social and psychological pressures that keep the traumatizing events unavailable to the conscious mind. In the introduction to *Postwar*, Judt maintains that some movements have been made in this direction these last four decades in several European countries – Germany, France, Poland, and Italy, among them –, in an attempt to provide a satisfactory closure to a historical period and to push forward the process of European construction.<sup>8</sup>

The main object of this article is to explore in some detail the trauma process that Spain has undergone since the early 1970s, a process that has contributed decisively both to healing some deep psychological wounds in the people and to the incorporation of the country into the EU. The article dwells upon the important role that a profoundly revisionary historiography and the recent legislation on historical memory have played in repositioning Spain regarding the Union. I maintain that, although the revisions made and the laws passed were primarily meant to assuage the pain and trauma caused by disturbing events that have kept haunting two generations of Spaniards, it is also clear that these steps should be

<sup>3</sup> See: Jeffrey C. Alexander et al., eds., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004); Ana Douglass and Thomas A. Vogler, eds., *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Paloma Aguilar, *Políticas de la memoria y memoria de la política: El caso español en perspectiva comparada* (Madrid: Alianza, 2008), 53-4.

<sup>7</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005), 1-10.



considered crucial in the process of integrating the country into the larger European project. Like many other Europeans, Spaniards have employed the discourse of trauma to describe what has happened, “not only to themselves, but also to the collectivity to which they belong.”<sup>9</sup> As a result, they have felt that the scars left by the Spanish Civil War and the unspeakable cruelties that followed it did not just leave indelible marks upon their collective consciousness, but also forced them to adopt a national identity with which they could not feel comfortable at all.

### On the Wounds and Scars of the Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War has been described by historians and conflict specialists as one of the most violent and heart-wrenching internal bellicose episodes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars have found it difficult to explain what could have driven a country to so much carnage and so many casualties – over 640,000, plus half a million exiles –, at a time when the Second Republic was trying to disseminate a modern sense of community and democracy in the nation. The most popular explanation for the brutality of the conflict has been the age-old schism between the so-called *dos Españas* (‘two Spains’): one secular, regionalist, and liberal; the other Catholic, unified, and very conservative. Any close scrutiny of the Civil War, however, soon shows that this explanation proves excessively simple and reductive. In fact, there were a variety of political, economic, socio-cultural, religious, and military factors that need to be borne in mind, if one wishes to account with any rigor for the *alzamiento* (‘rising’) in July 1936.<sup>10</sup> Some of these factors seemed rather contextual, such as the liberal de-centralizing revolution of the Republic and the obsession for unity of the military and political conservatives, but others had a structural character, such as the long-standing tensions of the urban capitalists of the periphery and the Madrid-based power or the high levels of illiteracy. All things considered, it seems that the key contributing factor in the outbreak of the Civil War was the challenge to the existing unitary conception of the state coming from the growing regionalism. In Richards’ opinion, “the army and political conservatives revealed the depth of their hatred to ‘separatism’ by claiming that even an ‘*España Roja*’ (a ‘Red Spain’) would be preferable to an ‘*España Rota*’ (a ‘Broken Spain’).”<sup>11</sup> It was this irrational fear of the disintegration of the centralized state and the disruption of a uniform national identity that was the mainspring of the bloodshed.

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<sup>9</sup> Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Stanley G. Payne, “Antecedentes y crisis de la democracia,” in *La Guerra Civil: Una nueva visión del conflicto que dividió España*, ed. Stanley G. Payne and Javier Tusell (Madrid: Temas de hoy, 1996), 17-121.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Richards, “Collective Memory, the Nation-State and Post-Franco Society,” in *Contemporary Spanish Cultural Studies*, ed. Barry Jordan and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 40.

The research carried out on the internecine conflict has evinced that cruelties and viciousness were habitual on both sides; nevertheless, it seems that the nationalist side was much more brutal in its punishment and repression of any forces that threatened the establishment after their victory. Preston may have stretched reality a bit when he compares the crimes committed by Franco's authoritarian regime to those that Nazi Germany perpetrated against particular human groups.<sup>12</sup> Yet, as Torres and Juliá have shown, the Civil War and the early years of the dictatorship were plagued with all kinds of mass executions, *perimortem* tortures and horrible mutilations that speak of the victorious party's relentless efforts to do away with any kind of dissent. Naturally, the repression displayed different forms and degrees, depending on the places where it was practiced, with class and cultural identity issues prevailing in some regions, whereas in others it was religious dissent and political ideology that were more severely punished.<sup>13</sup> Some historians have argued that, in fact, even more traumatic than the defeat in the armed conflict were those years after the war – almost two decades – during which the systematic violence against and repression of dissenters were inflicted.<sup>14</sup> As Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois note, “dirty wars” in which governments turn their fury against those of their own citizens suspected of harbouring the seeds of subversion are all the more traumatic because here “terror operates quietly and secretly, below and between the lines, as it were, in the blatant contradiction between ‘the official story’ and what actually happens on the ground.”<sup>15</sup>

Paradoxically, although Franco's regime dedicated abundant resources to strict censorship and all sorts of repressive tactics, the regime also depended on the preservation of selected memories. In order to legitimize itself, Francoism resorted to its military triumph and the reinvention of the Civil War as a pseudo-religious crusade to save the nation from the hands of communists and anarchists. There was a need to convince Spaniards – usually by manipulating history – that the victors had succeeded in the conflict due to their faith and patriotism, and that they retained the right to use violence whenever it was required in order to defend their principles.<sup>16</sup>

The struggle over collective memory became particularly virulent in those areas of the country with a distinct regional identity (Catalonia, Asturias or the Basque Country), for it was there that opposition to the regime became more apparent.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain* (London: Harper Collins, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> See Rafael Torres, *Víctimas de la victoria* (Madrid: Oberon, 2002), especially the introduction “El estigma de la derrota”; Santos Juliá, “De ‘guerra contra el invasor’ a ‘guerra fratricida’,” in *Víctimas de la Guerra Civil*, ed. Santos Juliá (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1999), 11–52.

<sup>14</sup> Torres, *Víctimas*, 4–6.

<sup>15</sup> Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, eds., *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 47.

<sup>16</sup> Richards, “Collective Memory,” 42.

Experts contend that traumatic experiences generally result in an ongoing process of reverberation, in which survivors feel compelled to re-enact the painful events. Something of this kind happened in these regions, where trauma functioned as a 'social glue' that helped to hold cultural and political collectives together and helped them to see their identity reinvigorated by the persistence of the regime's vengeance and the mystification of their persecution.<sup>17</sup> But, since those collective memories of suffering and oppression remained only latent during the first decades of the dictatorship, they could not take a definite and interpretable shape until much later, when the apt conditions for their re-emergence were finally fulfilled.<sup>18</sup> Predictably enough, those conditions were first met abroad, and so the initial attempts to bring back a silenced past came from foreign historians doing research on the Civil War and the early years of Franco's regime. The classic studies of the conflict by Hugh Thomas (1961) and Gabriel Jackson (1965) inaugurated a period of over 15 years in which foreign correspondents and researchers were those who made the greatest efforts to restore objectivity to the key events of the fratricidal war.<sup>19</sup> Although it is evident that these foreign scholars were generally prone to be highly critical of the vicious ways of the victors in the civil conflict, it is also important to acknowledge that their impact within Spain was rather limited as a result of the reduced dissemination of their work.

### The Trauma Process in Spain and its Recent Acceleration

Franco's dictatorial regime (1939-1975) succeeded in keeping the memories of the traumatizing experiences silenced for a long time, even as they constantly returned to torment the survivors. Curiously, however, a process of collective appeasement began to gain momentum even before the dictator's demise, as he came to realize that he could not keep up the standards of repression that he had imposed during the early decades after the armed conflict. As historians and political scientists have noted, the incipient efforts to retrieve and tell the truth about the past of the nation served not only to bring about the possibility of a collective reconciliation but also to affect the emergence of a feeling of legitimization among Spaniards to become members of a larger community.<sup>20</sup> In this sense, seeing how the European Community was beginning to take shape in the 70s and early 80s must have been a

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Douglass and Vogler, *Witness and Memory*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Caruth has spoken at some length about this inevitable delay in time between the experience of the demolishing events and their reappearance, often in the form of haunting nightmares and ghostly visions, in *Unclaimed Experience*, 3-4.

<sup>19</sup> Hugh S. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 3rd rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977); Gabriel Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965).

<sup>20</sup> Javier Tusell, "La reconciliación española," *Claves de Razón Práctica* 132 (2003): 32-9. See also Julián Casanova, "Una dictadura de cuarenta años," in *Morir, matar, sobrevivir: La violencia en la dictadura de Franco*, ed. Julián Casanova (Barcelona: Editorial Crítica, 2002), 1-50.

significant incentive to make Spain revise its past. Jelin and others have argued that these procedures to retrieve and refashion the fragments of one's past in the form of traumatic memories both arise and develop depending on the circumstances, "and are always anchored in the concerns, aspirations, and interpretative frames of the present times."<sup>21</sup>

In order to come to an understanding of the trauma process in Spain, it is very convenient to consider some recent contributions that experts in historical memory and trauma theory have made to the disciplines. These contributions are useful because they highlight the importance of defining – through cultural representation, acts of commemoration, and societal mobilization – collective means for undoing repression, and allowing feelings "of loss and mourning to be expressed."<sup>22</sup> The cathartic exercise of restoring memory and resisting political repression started in Spain, as noted above, some time before the end of the dictatorial regime in the mid-1970s, with some decrees showing that the insane silence could not be enforced for much longer. Juliá explains that, although the Law of Amnesty was not passed until October 1977, almost two years after Franco's death, a number of historians, journalists, lawyers, and political activists had already made sure that the country would not suffer from a bout of constitutional amnesia in its transition towards democracy.<sup>23</sup> Graham, on the other hand, feels the need to qualify that idea by stating that "[t]he role of culture in keeping alive the collective memory remains paramount as Spaniards continue to rediscover the past that was taken from them under the dictatorship; but it coexists with a converse urge to amnesia (*desmemoria*) which can be both a liberation from past traumas and a refusal to face them."<sup>24</sup> In any case, if one looks closely into the historiography and legislation produced in the 1970s and 80s, the conclusion to be drawn is that, despite the explicit political consensus to 'willfully forget' mutual hatreds of the past, still legal and socio-cultural organizations were fighting intensely to obtain some retribution for the victims.<sup>25</sup>

Judt claims that the unexpected transformation undergone by some southern European countries at this historical juncture derived from the fact that, although their political structures had obviously lagged behind, their society had not, and a new generation of politicians and businessmen had begun to compete for the sup-

<sup>21</sup> Elisabeth Jelin, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 16. See also Michael Lambek and Paul Antze, "Introduction: Forecasting Memory," in *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, eds. Michael Lambek and Paul Antze (London: Sage, 1996), xxii.

<sup>22</sup> Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Juliá, "De 'guerra contra el invasor,'" 49.

<sup>24</sup> Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi, eds., *Spanish Cultural Studies – An Introduction: The Struggle for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 313. See also: Richards, "Collective Memory," 46.

<sup>25</sup> For clear instances of this trend, the strong push given to legislation on war pensions, the return of Republican war veterans or the dismantling of Francoist symbols could be mentioned.

port of voters and customers.<sup>26</sup> There is little doubt that Franco's last years in power saw a more open economic, religious, and even cultural policy that made the initiation of the trauma process possible – even if it was only during the Transition Period that it would be fully consolidated. In Ferrándiz's opinion, the acceleration of the trauma process on the threshold of the new millennium was due to the realization that the victims of the conflict had been “betrayed and ignored” for too long and that their impending demise would mean “a complete disappearance of the collective memory of the country forever.”<sup>27</sup> In this context, it is not surprising that a remarkable number of artists, associations, and grassroots civil movements should foster all kinds of initiatives to retrieve the memories of the defeated and to establish the falsity of many of the official records. Novels such as *La voz dormida* (2002) by Dulce Chacón and *Veinte años y un día* (2003) by Jorge Semprún show deep commitment to dig into those experiences that had been bracketed out of history.<sup>28</sup> Only in this manner could a real process of healing and reconciliation take root in a society that had been prevented from facing past traumas that forestalled its natural development for too long.

Zaldívar and Castells explain that Spaniards have only very recently lost their ancestral fear that the ghosts from the past might interfere with their future, and have realized that their century-old isolation could finally be abandoned.<sup>29</sup> Yet, with the Transition Period coming to an end in the late 1980s, it seemed clear that the efforts to overcome past animosities and to learn tolerance were bearing some fruit in terms of socio-political democratization and cultural renewal. For one thing, the vanquished were given due recognition and concessions were granted from the central government to let the ‘historic regions’ play their part in national politics.<sup>30</sup> By 1992, when Madrid was named European Cultural Capital and the Olympic Games were held in Barcelona, it could safely be said that the country had found the stability of a new identity and that it was ready to embark on the more ambitious project of joining supranational organizations. Although it is true that Spain had been a member of the United Nations, the OECD, and the International Labour Organization for a number of decades, it is also evident that Spaniards did not see their country as a modern and democratic society that could hope to get on the same train as other European nations. Interestingly, the effort made these last two decades to come to grips with their troubling past has proved immensely beneficial in terms of gathering the self-confidence and conviction to

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<sup>26</sup> Judd, *Postwar*, 756. The epilogue to his book, tellingly entitled, “From the House of the Dead: An Essay on Modern European Memory,” discusses the importance of collective memories.

<sup>27</sup> Francisco Ferrándiz, “Exhumaciones y políticas de la memoria en la España contemporánea,” in *El derecho a la memoria*, ed. Felipe Gómez Isa (Bilbao: IDH Universidad de Deusto, 2006), 556.

<sup>28</sup> Rafael Torres’ *Víctimas de la victoria* also brings together numerous interviews with the survivors and witnesses of the most traumatic episodes during the Spanish Civil War.

<sup>29</sup> Carlos A. Zaldívar and Manuel Castells, *España, fin de siglo* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1992).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Richards, “Collective Memory,” 44; Tusell, “La reconciliación española,” 38.

believe that they were in a position to contribute to projects beyond their national borders.

### Closing Remarks: Centripetal and Centrifugal Purposes

This article has considered the critical role that efforts to restore historical memory and to provide retribution to those most deeply affected by Franco's repressive regime have played in Spain's recent history. Despite some scholars' opinion that it was a 'wilful amnesia' after the dictator's death that saved the country from getting entangled in age-old disputes and rivalries leading nowhere, the fact is that groups of survivors and witnesses, historians, lawyers, and political activists have done their best to make the long-silenced stories of the past see the light. Lambek and Antze cogently defend that retrieving traumatic experiences can sometimes be remarkably empowering and often leads to collective organizing that may achieve previously denied recognition.<sup>31</sup> No doubt names such as those of Ramón Tamames, Fernando Fernán-Gómez, Santos Juliá, Jorge Semprún, or Baltasar Garzón are immediately associated in our minds today with those tireless attempts to bring inner peace and social justice to those that had been erased from history. It must be admitted that, as Primo Levi and others have noted, managing to finally come to terms with the past and to give shape to memories that have been repressed for such a long time is not an easy task.<sup>32</sup> Not only that, but there are always the attendant dangers of commodifying those new narratives or sacralising them in such a way that they may also end up distorting the truth. In spite of these inevitable difficulties and risks, it must be said that the post-Transition Period in Spain has been characterized mostly by a balanced restoration of the past that has helped those who earlier on felt altogether excluded to perceive themselves as an integral part of the country.

Likewise, besides that centripetal process of retrieval of and reconciliation with one's own past, it is important to mention that an equally urgent centrifugal need to project a more positive image of the country abroad has also contributed decisively to the acceleration of trauma mobilization. Frey has written very lucidly about how countries such as Germany and France felt compelled to carry out this exercise of historical revisionism and reinterpretation of the past before they could engage in the activity of determining their role in the process of European integration.<sup>33</sup> Nothing less should be stated about Spain, a nation doubly burdened by a forty-year dictatorship that had fractured the society into rival factions and a highly isolationist policy that had kept it apart from some of the converging dynamics

<sup>31</sup> Lambek and Antze, "Introduction," xxiv.

<sup>32</sup> Primo Levi, *Los hundidos y los salvados*, trans. Pilar Gómez Védade (Barcelona: Muchnik Editores, 1989), 32-60.

<sup>33</sup> Hugo Frey, "Historical Memory and the Boundaries of European Integration," Surrey University, <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/LIS/MNP/may2000/Frey.html> (accessed 27 November 2009).

that had begun to take place in other countries. By the early 1990s, however, it was evident that, thanks to efforts to overcome cultural trauma and to seek mutual understanding between different socio-political groups, Spain was ready to embark on supranational undertakings on a par with other European states. In Tusell's opinion, the path to national reconciliation has not been an easy one, but it has definitely capacitated the country to embrace future projects that only a few decades ago would have been unthinkable.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Tusell, "La reconciliación española," 37-9.

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# Identity, Memory and Belonging

## The Friedland Transit Camp and the Process of Admission to Post-War Germany

Sascha Schießl

### Introduction

“Friedland! The name alone is a promise for those who are coming – a pledge and therefore a commitment for us.”<sup>1</sup> With these words, the *Friedlandhilfe*, an affiliation of charity organisations working in the refugee camp Friedland near Göttingen in Lower Saxony, began its appeal for donations in November 1957. By that time, the Friedland camp, established by the British military administration in September 1945 as a small-scale refugee camp, was a crucial institution in the Federal Republic. What had at first been an emergency solution to a pressing problem developed into an important transit camp where questions of identity and memory were dealt with.

The main task of the Friedland camp throughout the years was to admit people, who were coming to West Germany as a consequence of World War II, to German citizenship. Of course, there were other tasks at hand, for example looking after people heading east to the Soviet occupation zone in the immediate post-war era or caring for refugees such as *boat people* from Vietnam who were granted asylum by Lower Saxony in the late 1970s. But the most important function was to deal with consequences of the war Germany had unleashed. Even today, the camp does undertake this task, serving as the only transit camp for resettlers from Eastern Europe, although other groups, for instance various groups of refugees and, since the beginning of 2011, asylum seekers, outnumber the former by now.

Although various studies analyse Germany's dealing with its past,<sup>2</sup> the question of what happened to people passing through a transit camp is rarely asked. Instead,

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<sup>1</sup> Charity appeal issued by the *Friedlandhilfe* from November 1957, in: BA Koblenz B 106/24502.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Neil Gregor, *Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); Mary Fulbrook, *German National Identity after the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999); Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (München: Beck, 1996); Edgar Wolfrum, *Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Der Weg zur bundesrepublikanischen Erinnerung 1948-1990* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1999).

these studies mostly focus on discourses within post-war society and the political decision-making processes regarding admission and integration. As a result, the role played by newcomers and local actors in coming to terms with Germany's past and shaping memories of, for example, war, flight, expulsion and war captivity are more often than not neglected. Drawing on the example of the Friedland transit camp, the Federal Republic's most outstanding place to admit people to German citizenship<sup>3</sup>, this article will highlight the implementation of West German policy in transit camps and the interdependencies between post-war society, people admitted as German citizens, and local actors in the process of admission. This will help to better understand how and by whom identity, memory and public commemoration were shaped in West German society at a practical level and how discourses in this respect in turn influenced the process of admission. Because these broader topics cannot be elaborated here appropriately, the focus will be on questions of identity. What did newcomers experience when they were passing through Friedland? Were they admitted to German citizenship from the beginning or were they "turned into Germans" during their stay at the camp? Did a changing perception of the war and a changing public commemoration lead to a transformation in the process through which people were admitted as German citizens?<sup>4</sup>

### Looking after Refugees and Expellees: The Immediate Post-War Era

The first groups sheltered in Friedland were refugees and expellees. They were members of German minorities or German citizens from former German or German-occupied territories east of the Oder-Neisse line, who had fled from the advancing Red Army or were expelled as a consequence of the Third Reich's racial war.<sup>5</sup> Refugees and expellees were now on their way towards the Western occupation zones. While flight and expulsion had not occurred simultaneously in Eastern Europe, refugees and expellees had merged into one indiscernible group when they arrived in the British or American zone. Other groups were also on the move after the war's end, namely wartime evacuees, people in search of their families, former soldiers who had discharged themselves, members of German occupation administrations and others who were stranded far from their homes at the end of the war. They were mostly heading east to west and here joined refugees and expellees. In the early stages, a smaller and rapidly decreasing number of people went west to

<sup>3</sup> The only academic (but not widely published) study concerning the camp's history is: Dagmar Kleineke, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des Lagers Friedland 1945-1955* (Göttingen: Universität Göttingen, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> This article is part of a broader PhD project concerning Germany's dealing with the consequences of the war in postwar transit camps and the significance of the Friedland camp for the culture of remembrance in the Federal Republic.

<sup>5</sup> Wolfgang Benz, ed., *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten: Ursachen, Ereignisse, Folgen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1985); Detlev Brandes, *Der Weg zur Vertreibung 1938-1945: Pläne und Entscheidungen zum „Transfer“ der Deutschen aus der Tschechoslowakei und Polen* (München: Oldenbourg, 2001).

east instead. A substantial proportion of these people on the move went through one camp or more. It did take some time, however, until occupation administrations were able to secure their borders, thus directing most of the people crossing into their zone to one of the transit camps. At the Friedland camp, people arriving were looked after and then hurriedly sent further on their ways. By the end of 1945, more than 500,000 people were registered in Friedland, another half million people passed through the camp during the following year, most of them staying a few hours or one night only.<sup>6</sup>

Even though the camp represented the first station in the Western occupation zones for many of those fleeing or being expelled from Eastern Europe, Friedland did not gain the importance it had for some of the later groups. Questions concerning identity were not really an issue and, if they were, there was no reason to especially tie them to the Friedland camp. Above all, the Friedland camp was only one of many similar emergency solutions established in the immediate post-war era. In the British occupation zone, military officials founded nine camps in which German administrations and welfare organisations were enabled to shelter and provide for people passing through, whereas at the same time British officials had at least in principle a tool to regulate the influx of people into their zone. Likewise, transit camps were erected in the American and the Soviet occupation zones, while refugee camps spread to many cities. Hence, refugees or expellees passing through Friedland were likely to stay at other camps thereafter.<sup>7</sup> At a time when millions of people were on the move in occupied Germany<sup>8</sup>, Friedland merely was a small-scale solution for an urgent problem.

Furthermore, refugees, expellees and other groups passing through during the immediate post-war period had more pressing matters to deal with: Where to go next? What happened to family and friends? Where to find housing, food, work? Besides, people heading to Friedland in the early years of the camp's existence were almost exclusively German citizens or could at least expect to gain admission during the registration process. Although refugees and expellees were often received coldly and perceived as foreigners in post-war Germany, these partly hostile, partly ambivalent contacts were rather a consequence of the competition for scant resources than a question of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For exact figures with differentiations regarding the various groups looked after in Friedland, see: Kleineke, *Entstehung und Entwicklung des Lagers Friedland*, 17-34.

<sup>7</sup> For introductory remarks on refugee camps in postwar Germany, see Mathias Beer, "Ich möchte die Zeit nicht missen". Flüchtlingslager nach 1945 als totale Institutionen?," *Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen* 29.3 (2000): 186-93; Volker Ackermann, "Homo Barackensis: Westdeutsche Flüchtlingslager in den 1950er Jahren," in: *Anknüpfungen: Kulturgeschichte – Landesgeschichte – Zeitgeschichte: Gedenkschrift für Peter Hüttenberger*, ed. Volker Ackermann et al. (Essen: Klartext, 1995), 330-46.

<sup>8</sup> In addition to the aforementioned groups, former forced labourers and freed concentration camp inmates, so-called DPs (displaced persons), were also looked after by allied occupation administrations as well as the UNRRA and, from 1947 on, the IRO.

<sup>9</sup> Local conflicts between refugees and locals are, for example, discussed in Paul Erker, "Revolution

There was, however, one aspect in the Friedland camp's early period directly connected to questions concerning identity. Transit camps issued registration forms that refugees and expellees needed when they arrived at the towns or cities assigned to them. As most of the people arriving at the Friedland camp did not possess identification cards or any personal documents verifying their identity due to the circumstances of flight and expulsion, registration forms had to be issued *bona fide*. Moreover, especially during the camp's early period, a great number of forms were issued in a very short time in somewhat chaotic surroundings. Thus names were frequently misspelled or home towns understood the wrong way. These circumstances were a bargain for those in need of a new identity, for instance National Socialist or SS leaders, Nazi occupation administration officials or, in general, all those, who had good reasons to fear prosecution after the war was lost and future developments were uncertain. Although this is speculative, some people might also have seen an opportunity to leave their no longer wanted families or their personal problems behind. For want of informative sources, it is, however, barely possible to determine how many people did actually use one of the transit camps to obtain a new identity, which reasons they had and how they experienced this change of identity.

All things considered, the Friedland camp was a small wheel in a larger process in which people had to come to terms with their past and adjust to the new circumstances they were facing. During the following years, Friedland's role was about to change. While most of the provisional camps were closed within a few years after the end of the war when more and more people were able to move into new homes and the number of German refugees and expellees coming from Eastern Europe had begun to dwindle down, a smaller number of camps remained. The Friedland camp was one of them. It took over an increasing number of tasks and became widely known throughout West German society.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, questions of identity gained significance since the late 1940s. The two most important groups passing through Friedland after the Federal Republic had been established were returning prisoners of war (POWs) from Soviet captivity and resettlers of German origin from Eastern Europe.

### **“Tor zur Freiheit”: Friedland at the Centre of Public Attention in the 1950s**

In public perception, the Friedland camp was strongly intertwined with the fate of the POWs. Although returning POWs were a rather small group looked after at

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des Dorfes? Ländliche Bevölkerung zwischen Flüchtlingszustrom und landwirtschaftlichem Strukturwandel,” in *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland*, ed. Martin Broszat et al. (München: Oldenbourg, 1988), 367–425.

<sup>10</sup> The camp administration itself was also eager to gain public attention for Friedland and even tried to influence newspapers. Various exchanges of letters in this matter can be found here: HStA Hannover Nds 386 Acc 16/83 No. 85/86.

the camp at that time, their arrival did nevertheless attract the highest attention any group in Friedland received before or afterwards. In the 1950s, the return of POWs stimulated important questions of identity, memory and belonging.<sup>11</sup> From August 1946 until the end of 1949, more than 300,000 POWs had passed through Friedland, which was by then the only location in the Federal Republic to discharge former *Wehrmacht* soldiers. While Western Allies had released almost all their prisoners by then, the Soviet Union still held back an unknown number of prisoners. The question of how to bring back home the prisoners still held in Soviet captivity grew more and more important in the early Federal Republic. Many families in Germany still hoped that their missing husbands, sons or fathers had not been killed in action during the war but were being held in Soviet camps without being able to write home.<sup>12</sup> Their hopes and worries were directly connected to the Friedland camp, which by then, in the early 1950s, had become the key symbol for the fate of former soldiers. At that time, the camp was widely known in post-war society and, against the background of widespread anti-communist attitudes,<sup>13</sup> often portrayed as the mythically charged *Tor zur Freiheit* (freedom gate). Newspapers, radio stations and newsreels constantly reported on events in Friedland and were present whenever a major transport of home-comers arrived at the camp.

When eventually the last returnees arrived in late 1955 and early 1956, the Friedland camp was the stage for iconic events in the Federal Republic's history. Thousands of people, politicians, state officials and the media went to Friedland to welcome the home-comers with open arms as honourable heroes who had suffered and overcome Soviet injustice. Theodor Oberländer, the Federal Minister for Expellees, told returnees in Friedland in his speech: "You had to endure German calamity till the end. You have suffered for us, for all of us. You have sacrificed your youth, your health, your freedom for us."<sup>14</sup> The return of the last prisoners of war did not evoke remembrance of a war of extermination in Eastern Europe ten years earlier, but led to an affirmation of German victimhood. Accordingly, a veterans association, the *Verband der Heimkehrer*,<sup>15</sup> erected a statue in Friedland in 1955 which was directly connected with these views. The statue portrayed a solemn man

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<sup>11</sup> Even today, Friedland is best known for the arrival of the last returnees from Soviet war captivity.

<sup>12</sup> The fate of the POWs in Soviet captivity and their impact on postwar society are at length discussed in: Frank Biess, *Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). See also: Albrecht Lehmann, *Gefangenschaft und Heimkehr: Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in der Sowjetunion* (München: Beck, 1986); Arthur L. Smith, *Heimkehr aus dem Zweiten Weltkrieg: Die Entlassung der deutschen Kriegsgefangenen* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1985); Peter Steinbach, "Jenseits von Zeit und Raum: Kriegsgefangenschaft in der Frühgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Universitas* 45 (1990): 637-49.

<sup>13</sup> Gesine Schwan, *Antikommunismus und Antiamerikanismus in Deutschland: Kontinuität und Wandel nach 1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> NWDR recording "Friedland – Reden von und vor Heimkehrern," undated (autumn 1955), in: NDR-Hörfunkarchiv Hannover 6900468000.

<sup>15</sup> Birgit Schwelling, *Heimkehr – Erinnerung – Integration: Der Verband der Heimkehrer, die ehemaligen Kriegsgefangenen und die westdeutsche Nachkriegsgesellschaft* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010).

overcoming war captivity as symbolised by barbed wire. Here barbed wire was not linked to concentration camps or the Holocaust but to Soviet prisoner-of-war camps. Likewise, the commemoration of German victims was far more prominent in public memory than the remembrance of victims of German crimes.<sup>16</sup>

In this regard, returning POWs were mainly perceived as a homogenous group. Even though one-third of the homecomers were not POWs at all but political prisoners arrested after the war's end in the Soviet occupation zone and now discharged as well, the former soldiers almost exclusively became the focus of attention. Only a few returnees, such as obvious National Socialists or war criminals, were excluded from these dominant discourses of German victimhood. While politicians, media and the public did focus on POWs as a group, the stories of individual returnees took a back seat. Their individual fates were not important for the story; the group's fate in turn was a mere cipher representing the self-victimisation of post-war society. Therefore, returnees' individual wishes, hopes, expectations or worries not fitting into these interpretations were rarely discussed in press reports and seldom mentioned in speeches of politicians or dignitaries. When these aspects were acknowledged, they did usually correspond to post-war society's expectations regarding the POWs. Returning POWs had, however, to deal with questions of identity which did not meet post-war society's expectations.

As a few examples indicate, returnees did face various problems in Friedland to which they responded in different ways. The former *Wehrmacht* general Walther von Seydlitz-Kurzbach was considered a turncoat and shunned by his comrades in Friedland for his call for surrender in Stalingrad and his participation in the German anti-Nazi organisations National Committee for a Free Germany (*Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland*) and League of German Officers (*Bund deutscher Offiziere*) during Soviet war captivity.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, post-war society received Seydlitz reluctantly. In Friedland, Seydlitz at first tried to gain public attention and announced his interest in political activities, but he finally fell silent after his return home.<sup>18</sup> In contrast to Seydlitz, Ernst Günther Schenck, a former *Wehrmacht* physician and *SS-Obersturmbannführer*, who had conducted experiments on humans in the Mauthausen concentration camp, led the so-called 'Vow of Friedland' (*Schwur von Friedland*) upon his arrival, whereby hundreds of returnees publicly pledged they did not murder, disgrace or plunder during the war.<sup>19</sup> In comparison with men like

<sup>16</sup> The complex history of the public commemoration in the Federal Republic had to be simplified here. For detailed but competing studies concerning the public commemoration in the Federal Republic during the 1950s, see Moeller, *War Stories*; Gregor, *Haunted City*.

<sup>17</sup> "Seydlitz will sich politisch betätigen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 October 1955: 3.

<sup>18</sup> Regarding Seydlitz' role in the *Wehrmacht* and in war captivity as well as his homecoming, see the biography by Julia Warth, *Verräter oder Widerstandskämpfer? Wehrmachtsgeneral Walther von Seydlitz-Kurzbach* (München: Oldenbourg, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Ernst Günther Schenck gave his own impressions in his memoirs; see Ernst Günther Schenck, *Nie mehr nach Hause? Als Wissenschaftler, Sträfling und Arzt 10 Jahre in Gefangenen-, Arbeits- und Besserungslagern* (Koblenz: Bublitz, 1997), 465.

Schenck, other home-comers only wanted to see their families again or, to the camp physician's unease, just to get a drink or maybe visit a prostitute.<sup>20</sup> However, returnees' voices remain somewhat silent in this regard.

By all means, home-comers did have to face the expectations of family, friends and post-war society. They did also have to come to terms with what they had seen or done during the war or while in captivity. Furthermore, home-comers had to regain their role in their families, in their social environment and in post-war society.<sup>21</sup> In addition, home-comers had not only to be discharged but also at least formally to be accepted as German citizens. A returnee mentioned this aspect in a radio interview in the autumn of 1955: "You have to be stamped as a German human again and therefore you have to receive tons of documents, which allow you to return to this human existence in the first place."<sup>22</sup>

After passing through the camp, many returnees expressed their sentiment regarding their experience in Friedland. A returnee wrote a poem shortly after his stay at the camp, in the autumn of 1953: "Friedland – the home I found / Friedland – the life I found / Friedland – the love I found / Friedland – thanks to you."<sup>23</sup> Although returnees perceived their stay in Friedland absolutely positive, this did first and foremost reflect the contrast to former captivity in the Soviet Union. In addition, their reception in the Federal Republic exceeded any expectations they might have had prior to their return, therefore shining all the brighter. The actual challenges for returnees did, however, begin after they had left the Friedland camp.

### Subsiding Importance: The Admission of Resettlers to the Federal Republic

From the late 1950s on, the nature of public commemoration slowly changed, when trials against war criminals drew attention to German crimes during the war and a new generation inherited offices, for example as public servants or in the justice system. In the course of time, discourses regarding German victimhood gradually made way for more complex and balanced perceptions of Germany's past.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, public attention to the Friedland camp subsided over the

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<sup>20</sup> There are complaints about the last two aspects by the camp's physician in his reports on 10 August, 7 and 11 December 1953, in: HStA Hannover Nds. 386 Acc. 16/83 No. 3 and No. 16. These aspects are briefly mentioned in Kleineke, *Das Lager Friedland*, 123-9.

<sup>21</sup> For a detailed discussion of returned POWs and their memories, see Svenja Goltermann, *Die Gesellschaft der Überlebenden: Deutsche Kriegsheimkehrer und ihre Erfahrungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (München: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> NWDR recording "Heimkehrer in Friedland," 7 October 1955, in: NDR-Hörfunkarchiv Hannover 6900454000.

<sup>23</sup> Poem by Karl E. sent to the camp's director on 17 October 1953, in: HStA Hannover Nds. 380 Acc. 62a/65 Nr. 527.

<sup>24</sup> For further references, see again Moeller, *War Stories*; Gregor, *Haunted City*; as well as Fulbrook, *German National Identity*.



next decades, as the camp was now no longer mainly perceived as a symbol for German victimhood. This also caused changes for the groups the Friedland camp was responsible for, most notably for resettlers of German origin.<sup>25</sup>

Most studies concerning resettlers come from sociology, political science or related research areas and mostly focus on the Federal German policy of immigration and integration but usually omit historical aspects. Furthermore, most articles concentrate on the 1990s, whereas the admission of resettlers during the 1960s or 1970s is casually touched upon at the most.<sup>26</sup> While Münz/Ohliger and Dietz include a historical perspective, they mainly emphasise socio-structural aspects, for example differences between resettlers and the West German population.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, resettlers' experiences at the transit camps or the interdependency between resettlers and the Federal Republic's officials are rarely discussed.

In the Federal Republic, 'resettler' (*Aussiedler*) had not been a category until the war's end with its consequences for German minorities in Eastern Europe.<sup>28</sup> Following Germany's principle of *ius sanguinis*, the Federal Republic's Constitution (*Grundgesetz*) from 1949 did not only mention German citizens in its definition of 'Germans' but did also include people of German descent (*deutsche Volkszugehörige*). The Federal Law of Expellees (*Bundesvertriebenengesetz*) from 1953 provided further definitions for the latter.<sup>29</sup>

In this regard, two aspects were crucial: Resettlers were, in part as former citizens of the German Reich, living in former German territories east of the Oder-Neisse line or they had been members of German minorities in Eastern European states. Moreover, resettlers were those who had not been expelled, had not fled or had not been able to flee at the end of the war or in the months thereafter, but now wanted to emigrate to the Federal Republic. Even though their departure from their former homes was part of a more regulated population transfer, it was also a consequence of World War II. As their standing in Eastern European countries had drastically suffered due to Germany's crimes during the war and the occupation, German minorities found themselves marginalised and put under pressure thereafter, which increased their wish to emigrate to West Germany. In the Federal Republic, the legal regulations granted resettlers immediate admission to German citizenship. From 1950 onwards, resettlers passed through a number of

<sup>25</sup> This also applied to refugees and emigrants leaving the GDR, who to some extent also passed through Friedland, even though the transit camps in Uelzen-Bohldamm and Gießen were formally responsible for this group.

<sup>26</sup> For example: Ruud Koopmans, "Germany and Its Immigrants: An Ambivalent Relationship," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 25.4 (1999): 627-47; Marianne Takle, "(Spät)Aussiedler: From Germans to Immigrants," *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics* 17.2 (2011): 161-82.

<sup>27</sup> Rainer Münz and Rainer Ohliger, "Privilegierte Migration: Deutsche aus Ostmittel- und Osteuropa," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 27 (1998): 401-44; Barbara Dietz, "Zuwanderung und Integration: Aussiedler in Deutschland," *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 27 (1998): 445-72.

<sup>28</sup> Takle, "(Spät)Aussiedler": 164.

<sup>29</sup> Koopmans, "Germany and Its Immigrants": 630-1.



transit camps in the Federal Republic and were since then by far the largest group looked after in Friedland.

While resettlers were perceived as a homogenous group, they were primarily linked by the requirements and circumstances which brought them to the Federal Republic. Apart from that, resettlers distinguished themselves regarding the state or region they had left, their former social status, their religion, morale codes and traditions, the possibility to bring along parts of their belongings, their previous links to western Germany and their view on their future home, the presence of relatives in the Federal Republic and their knowledge of the German language. The challenges resettlers were facing did also depend on the time they left their former homes and arrived in the Federal Republic. It made a huge difference if resettlers came to the Friedland camp and West Germany in the 1950s or 1960s or in the late 1980s and 1990s. Because the opportunity or permission for resettlers to leave did correlate with the relations between West and East as well as the local political situation in the Soviet Union or in other Eastern European states, the number of resettlers arriving at Friedland and other camps fluctuated over the decades.<sup>30</sup> Until 1987, about 1.4 million resettlers were admitted to the Federal Republic, albeit not all of them passed through Friedland.<sup>31</sup> Due to *glasnost*, *perestroika* and finally the fall of the Iron Curtain, resettlers could more easily emigrate to (West) Germany in the late 1980s. Between 1988 and 1999, about 2.5 million resettlers came to the Federal Republic.<sup>32</sup> As a consequence of restrictions in Eastern European states on speaking German, many of these late resettlers (called ‘*Spätaussiedler*’ in German) faced linguistic problems in their new environment, whereas many of the former resettlers spoke German fluently.

Even though resettlers gained German citizenship, questions of identity were nevertheless an issue. The later resettlers arrived, the more fragile their status was. As a result of the aforementioned changes in West Germany’s public commemoration since the late 1950s, resettlers were decreasingly perceived as Germans and with that no longer admitted to the Federal Republic as German victims symbolising post-war society’s perceived victimhood. Instead, public attention for resettlers dwindled down. In the public perception, resettlers slowly turned into foreigners and were, especially in later decades, called ‘Poles’ or ‘*Rußlanddeutsche*’ (Russian Germans). The Lutheran minister at the Friedland camp, Lippert, complained as early as 1958 that even clerics and teachers did not possess enough knowledge as to why resettlers were coming to the Federal Republic.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, questions of identity grew more and more important. They were directly addressed in Friedland, as the camp was the most important place where resettlers were admitted as

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<sup>30</sup> See also Münz and Ohliger, “Privilegierte Migration”: 406–8.

<sup>31</sup> For the figure, see Koopmans, “Germany and Its Immigrants”: 627.

<sup>32</sup> For the figure, see *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Johannes Lippert, Friedland diary sheets, 6 October 1958, in BA Koblenz B 150/3304.

German citizens.

West German society admitted resettlers and granted them German citizenship with full civic rights but had to lay down rules concerning the conditions and procedures of admission. During the 1950s and 1960s, transit camps like Friedland were assigned a crucial but also ambivalent role in dealing with these questions. On the one hand, resettlers arriving at Friedland were admitted, provided with food, clothing, money and so forth, prepared for the life in the Federal Republic and finally admitted as German citizens. On the other hand, transit camps like Friedland were an instrument to control and check resettlers and other groups upon their arrival and during their stay. This became apparent in the process of registration and admission in Friedland, which had evolved into a more and more complex and bureaucratic procedure since the late 1940s, taking two or more days to complete. This process did not only include inevitable formal procedures but did also highlight the uneasy relationship the Federal Republic had regarding the resettlers. Even though resettlers were accepted as German citizens and rejection at this point was rare, the extensive registration process illustrated they did not yet, while they were at the camp, belong to West German society. Resettlers had in a sense to prove themselves.

An internal memorandum the Friedland camp administration issued for their staff in 1960 gave a guidance regarding the counsel and care a newcomer should receive. It referred to refugees from the GDR but could, albeit this is not mentioned in the memorandum, be easily applied to resettlers as well. The memorandum's principle purpose was to urge camp advisors to refrain from promoting political statements, but it did also show the ambivalent character these counsels had. On the one hand, a refugee should feel that "he is, with his experience under communist rule, a valuable factor for the political life in the Federal Republic," on the other hand, a "civic instruction" for these refugees was considered necessary.<sup>34</sup>

The distance between the Federal Republic's society and resettlers was also clearly evident when it came to medical examinations. These examinations were not merely restricted to a routine check-up, but during the 1950s did also include a screening for venereal diseases. According to federal law, such screenings could only be conducted if a person was already suffering from a venereal disease or was strongly suspected to be infected. Neither was the case for resettlers or likewise screened refugees from the GDR, whose infection rates were not higher than the rate in the West German population. These screenings did obviously reflect older patterns of thought, emphasising dangers for the racial body (*Volkskörper*). In this regard, those who wanted to be admitted had first to show they did not pose any sanitary threat to West German society. These proceedings did only change when camp physicians from Sandbostel and Uelzen-Bohldamm themselves, indicating

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<sup>34</sup> Camp administration's memorandum, March 23th, 1960, in: HStA Hannover Nds. 386 Acc. 16/83 No. 1.

the infection rates, denounced these screenings as illegal in the late 1950s.<sup>35</sup> During the 1960s, medical examinations apart from venereal screenings continued. A medical report was required before federal and state officials allocated the resettlers among the federal states.

As the latter procedure indicates, resettlers were not entirely free to decide in which town or federal state they were going to live after their stay at the camp. Only resettlers whose relatives already lived in the Federal Republic could express their wish to reside near them. The rest had, at least for a start, to go where they were sent, if they did not want to forfeit state financial aid. Federal state officials in turn did choose resettlers they wanted to admit according to their particular economic needs. If a resettler failed to match the economic profile – which could happen to a single mother with two or three children, for example, – federal state officials bargained until one of them eventually agreed to admit him or her to their federal state.<sup>36</sup>

Resettlers therefore found themselves in an intermediary state separating their former and their forthcoming lives. They had already left their homes, family, friends, work and so forth behind, but had not yet arrived in their new lives. The process resettlers had to run through was somewhat similar to *rites de passage*. In cultural anthropology, *rites de passage* are defined as a person's transfer from one social status to another connected to ritual ceremonies. Usually three stages are distinguished: separation, transition and reincorporation.<sup>37</sup> However, there is an important difference between the process experienced by resettlers and the concept of *rites de passage*. Here a person is separated from society but then, after the ritual transition, reincorporated into his or her society. In contrast, people passing through Friedland left their former society and social status behind, obtaining another status during their stay at the camp. They did not, afterwards, return to their former society but entered one which was as new and unfamiliar as the social status they now obtained.

This does, of course, not imply that emigration to the Federal Republic and admission at Friedland was necessarily a negative experience for resettlers. Admittedly, some resettlers, especially since the 1990s, have not coped with the difficulties related to adopting their new role and, leaving Germany, returned to their former homes. Even in the late 1950s, individual resettlers moved back to their former homes in Eastern Europe.<sup>38</sup> These cases indicate the difficulties experienced by some resettlers. For other resettlers, however, their experience was completely

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<sup>35</sup> Several letters and reports on this topic can be found in: HStA Hannover Nds. 120 Hild. Acc. 111/77 8/2.

<sup>36</sup> For this aspect, see HStA Hannover Nds. 120 Hild. Acc. 111/77, Nr. 32.

<sup>37</sup> For a cultural anthropological introduction, see Arnold van Gennep, *Übergangsriten* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1986).

<sup>38</sup> One example for an early return can be found here: Internal memorandum issued by the camp administration, 28 August 1958, in: HStA Hannover Nds. 386 Acc. 16/83 No. 1.

different. For them, Friedland was the beginning of a new life and their stay at the camp directly connected to their German identity. A resettler who arrived in 1956 wrote a Christmas card to the camp administration stating that Friedland will never leave her mind. She remembered the first German preaching at the camp and praised the camp's excellent organisation: "Especially before Christmas, I gratefully think of Friedland – it was – with one word – German."<sup>39</sup> Apart from such rather individual voices, it is not easy to determine resettlers' perceptions, as there are no historical studies focussing on the aspect of transition or the questions of 'integration' and admission from resettlers' point of view.

In the early 1990s, the increasing number of resettlers as well as financial and social problems regarding their integration led to an amendment of the *Bundesvertriebenengesetz*. As a result, the possibility to be accepted as resettler to the Federal Republic was restricted. Consequently, the numbers of resettlers drastically dropped during the following years.<sup>40</sup> Although their number is still decreasing, even today German resettlers from Eastern Europe are coming to Friedland. They all have to pass the camp to be accepted as German citizens. Some of the resettlers stay in Friedland for up to half a year and partake in so-called 'integration courses,' in which they can, amongst other things, learn German, if necessary.

## Conclusion

Although their feelings, impressions, hopes and wishes remain somewhat speculative due to a lack of sources or various difficulties linked with them, people passing through Friedland did perceive their stay at the camp in manifold ways. For some of them, the camp was no more than a stopover on their way to, in most cases, West Germany; for other newcomers Friedland was the place where they felt 'free' for the first time in awhile after leaving communist domain. Still others perceived the camp as a positive place because of the care and support they received there. Thus on a personal level questions of identity or belonging were not always evident.

Nevertheless, since the late 1940s the Friedland camp was a threshold to a physical, temporal and mental transition dealing with questions of identity, belonging, memory and coming to terms with Germany's past for the Federal Republic's

<sup>39</sup> Christmas card to the camp administration sent by L.S., 22 December 1956, in: HStA Hannover Nds. 386 Acc. 16/83 Nr. 1.

<sup>40</sup> The political process as well as the legislative changes are discussed in Takle, "(Spät)Aussiedler"; Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels, "Willkommene Deutsche oder tolerierte Fremde? Aussiedlerpolitik und -verwaltung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland seit den 1950er Jahren," in *Migration steuern und verwalten: Deutschland vom späten 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Jochen Oltmer (Göttingen: V und R Unipress, 2003), 399-419. For the political background as well as the associated restrictions regarding the right of asylum and the modifications of federal immigration legislation, see Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland: Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter, Flüchtlinge* (München: Beck, 2001), 286-334.

society as well for those admitted as German citizens. These questions were sometimes directly addressed, for example when returning POWs were cordially welcomed and thereby incorporated into dominant discourses of self-victimisation in the Federal Republic, but at times only hinted at, for instance in the camp's procedures of registration and admission. In any case, these aspects do reveal how important the perceptions of the war and its aftermath were for the processes of admission in Friedland. With regard to the various actors involved, the often competing perceptions did shape to a high degree how people were admitted to the Federal Republic, in which historical or political context they were put, and to what extent newcomers had the chance to actively participate in dealing with the aforementioned questions of identity and memory.

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**E**urope – Space for Transcultural Existence? is the first volume of the new series, Studies in Euroculture, published by Göttingen University Press. The series derives its name from the Erasmus Mundus Master of Excellence Euroculture: Europe in the Wider World, a two year programme offered by a consortium of eight European universities in collaboration with four partner universities outside Europe. This master highlights regional, national and supranational dimensions of the European democratic development; mobility, migration and inter-, multi- and transculturality. The impact of culture is understood as an element of political and social development within Europe.

The articles published here explore the field of Euroculture in its different elements: it includes topics such as cosmopolitanism, cultural memory and traumatic past(s), colonial heritage, democratization and Europeanization as well as the concept of (European) identity in various disciplinary contexts such as law and the social sciences. In which way have Europeanization and Globalization influenced life in Europe more specifically? To what extent have people in Europe turned 'transcultural'? The 'trans' is understood as indicator of an overlapping mix of cultures that does not allow for the construction of sharp differentiations. It is explored in topics such as (im)migration and integration, as well as cultural products and lifestyle.

The present economic crisis and debt crisis have led, as side-result, to a public attack on the open, cosmopolitan outlook of Europe. The values of the multicultural and civil society and the idea of a people's Europe have become debatable. This volume offers food for thought and critical reflection.



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